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THE TRUTH ABOUT POLAND

Mr. Mikolajczyk is now discussing the Polish situation with the Soviet Government and the members of the Polish Committee of National Liberation. This shrewd peasant leader, whose integrity has never been doubted, has too long allowed himself to become the virtual prisoner of President Rackiewz and General Sosnkowski, and it was good to hear that Mr. Churchill had speeded his visit to Moscow and had brought Stalin "very reasonable" in demanding a Polish Government that was friendly to the U.S.S.R. This automatically excludes most members of the present Polish Government in London. Even when the Polish Cabinet on July 30th gave Mr. Mikolajczyk grudging permission to go to Moscow, it tried to deny him the power to make any binding agreement. The Peasant Party, however, asked him to act as a full plenipotentiary on its behalf and to arrange for full co-operation with the Committee of National Liberation. Four points were stressed: a proposal to form a Provisional Government of Democratic Unity, consisting of members of the Committee and the Peasant Party; the need for free election and new Polish Constitution as soon as possible; the abolition of the post of Commander-in-Chief and the formation of a War Council responsible to the Provisional Government; and the acceptance of the Curzon Line with certain modifications especially concerning Lwov, Grodno, Bialystock and Bielcz.

If Mr. Mikolajczyk can put forward these proposals, agreement should not be difficult in Moscow. That would be distressing only to some members of the Polish Government in London, who, even before the Premier reached Moscow, were discussing the formation of a "Government of officials" who would oust Mr. Mikolajczyk if he were too successful in his mission.

These intrigues are in line with the whole story of Polish-Soviet relations. Many well-intentioned and responsible comments (even, for instance, these in the sober columns of the *Economist* and *Observer*) suffer, it is clear, from lack of knowledge of the actual record and intentions of some members of the Polish Government in exile. Russian policy towards Poland is certainly open to criticism, but the criticism becomes irrelevant when we understand two salient facts. The first is that the Polish Government long based its plans on the assumption that Soviet armies could not defeat the Germans and that eventually a peace would be made in which Poland would find herself in alliance with the Western Powers defending her Eastern frontier against Bolshevism. Much becomes clear when we realise that the Polish situation is very much what the French would have been if *the Vichy Government had been in England during the war and De Gaulle with the resistance movement in France*. The analogy would be worth detailed elaboration.

Secondly, when it is urged that the U.S.S.R. is acting in an arbitrary and unilateral way in supporting a Government on the spot instead of the Government in exile, it should be remembered that, with Soviet armies on Polish soil, Moscow has no alternative but to recognise as a *de facto* Government those Poles who are ready and able to co-operate in the military liberation and civil administration of their country.

We can do no more here than refer to a few striking incidents in this disastrous story. From the beginning of the German invasion of the U.S.S.R., the Polish Government insisted that Russia would be defeated in three months, and long after this estimate was disproved, it still openly discussed the date of the collapse of the Red Army. General Anders (Commander-in-Chief of the Polish army on Soviet territory until it was evacuated to stations in the Middle East) told General Berling, his successor and Commander of the Polish divisions serving with the Red Army, that he was satisfied with the turn of events. "When the Red Army collapses under German blows," he said, "which will not be more than a few months, we will be able to break through to the Caspian Sea. Since we shall be the only armed Power on the territory, we shall be in a position to do whatever we please." General Anders' wishes were never fulfilled, but he continued his anti-Soviet intrigues in the Polish army, where, it is true, there was fertile soil.

The Polish High Command has been aided and abetted by most, but not all, the Polish politicians in exile. London has proved a convenient vantage ground from which to build up an inflated bureaucracy which has spent millions of pounds, given or loaned by the Allied Governments, partly on anti-Soviet propaganda and partly in an effort to control the resistance movement in Poland. The resistance movement has been deliberately kept in ignorance of the facts about the Red Army, and Poles who have escaped to Britain have expressed surprise at learning that Russia is respected and admired in this country as an ally. Events have dispelled this ignorance in Poland. As the victories of the Soviet armies became undeniable, and the stream of Russian military supplies to the resistance movement increased, the appeal of the Union of Polish Patriots (formed in the winter of 1942–43) inevitably became effective. In the middle of 1943 the cleavage within Poland was deep and the propaganda from Moscow, which urged increasing sabotage and guerrilla activity, was in sharp contrast with orders from the Polish Government in London, whose line was patience until the opportune moment for the all-out blow.

It was at this point that the National Council of Poland was formed from representatives of districts already liberated by the Red Army. Early in 1944, it adopted a provisional constitution in which it declared that its moral and legal foundation lay in the Constitution of 1921 and that the Polish people had never recognised Pilsudski's "Totalitarian Constitution" of 1935. The Council proceeded to form a People's Army to unite all military formations abroad, and to state as its foreign policy that all Polish territory in the west and north which had been "Germanized by force" should be restored, while the frontier line of Eastern Poland should be settled by agreement with the U.S.S.R.

Inside Poland, Polish partisans increasingly co-operated with Soviet guerrillas in adjacent territory. British and American journalists who visited General Berling's army in the field in May last came away impressed by their technical efficiency and enthusiasm and with the clarity

with which many of the men knew what kind of Poland they were fighting for; their programme already demanded that the land should be fairly distributed and worked on a co-operative basis, and that the big industrial cartels should be State-controlled.

In May, a delegation of the National Council of Poles in occupied Poland arrived in Moscow, and it was already clear that Moscow would necessarily treat this Committee as a *de facto* Government unless the more intransigent members of the Polish Government were dropped and a speedy Polish-Soviet agreement thus made possible. The official Polish line was to regard the delegation's visit to Moscow as no more than a form of pressure from Moscow; and the Foreign Office acquiesced. By this time, however, it is doubtful whether the National Council or the Union of Polish Patriots seriously considered the clique in London. On June 23rd the Union issued a proclamation rejecting the Polish Government in London and saying that: "The National Council will create the prerequisite conditions for the formation of a Provisional Government enjoying the confidence of the people."

This is an historic moment in Anglo-Soviet-Polish relations. An agreement now could cement existing Allied agreements, in particular, the Anglo-Soviet Alliance. Failure to reach agreement would be a political victory for the Nazis. The Foreign Office has played a dangerous role in taking advantage of the Polish Government's willingness to do anti-Soviet propaganda. Perhaps it still thinks of it as a useful ally at the Peace Conference? Mr. Churchill is now, it seems, trying to repair the damage by welcoming the discussions and encouraging a settlement. To cling to the discredited Polish Government in London is now bankruptcy. Those members who want to take part in the building up of a democratic Poland and in Polish-Soviet friendship have their opportunity now, and their last chance. Mr. Mikolajczyk will, we hope, come to some satisfactory agreement with the Soviet Government and the Committee of National Liberation and march with his people into a liberated Warsaw.

Turkey's Steerage Ticket

With the Grand National Assembly back at Ankara after the summer recess and the Turkish Army conveniently disposed for its summer manœuvres, the stage was set for Prime Minister Sarajoglu to hand Ambassador von Papen his passport. Having spent five years in waiting to see how the military cat would jump, the Turkish Government has now definitely decided that it is safe, within limits, to gamble on an Allied victory. In short, Turkey is going to "work her passage"; but it is extremely unlikely that she will put up the money for a saloon-class ticket. The Allies are not in a position to offer the Turks rewards which that hard-bargaining nation would consider to be commensurate with the risk of having Istambul bombed severely by the Luftwaffe, or sufficient even to justify the cost of an active campaign against Bulgaria. By breaking off diplomatic relations with the Axis, the Turks will doubtless argue that they are compelling the Bulgarians to transfer forces from Yugoslavia to Thrace, thereby lightening the task of Tito's army. Watching Russian victories with an eye at once appreciative and suspicious, M. Sarajoglu will be able to remind the Western Allies after the armistice that Turkey at least took some risk in making a gesture of good will. Above all, the Turks will not forfeit admission to the Peace Conference. Whether their delegates will have seats at the table or be accorded "standing room" remains to be seen. Mr. Churchill promises Turkey support, if attacked, but is otherwise non-committal.

Progress of the Armies

As narrator of the Allied effort on the Western Front, Mr. Churchill had luck; the American attack which has broken through the left wing of General Hausser's 7th Army in Normandy enabled the Premier in his speech in Parliament to balance the unbroken series of Russian victories with good hopes of a war of movement also in France. It is indeed not over-optimistic to forecast that the war will reach its climax, if not necessarily its final end, within a matter of weeks. Having reached Riga, and thus cut off from the Reich at least 20 German divisions now isolated in Latvia and Estonia, the Russians are at the gates of Warsaw. Further south they have forced the Vistula and, still further south, they are advancing rapidly on Cracow. There is little reason to doubt Russian ability to maintain the impetus of their massive offensive; and between the Vistula and the frontier of Germany there is no natural obstacle to overcome. Can the Allies in the West achieve, even on a smaller scale, a victory so decisive? Everything depends on whether they can keep the Germans moving, now that they have been dislodged from a large segment of their prepared positions round the bridgehead. If American progress southwards can be maintained, Brittany, with its valuable ports, should fall rapidly into Allied hands, and once the Allies can debouch from the close Normandy country into more open country south of Rennes and Le Mans, where the enemy can have few or no strategic reserves available, the campaign may well take a dramatic turn.

The Argentine Crisis

The memorandum on Argentina which Mr. Hull circulated to the South American States last week seems to be attracting as much attention in the United States as the campaigns in Europe and the Pacific. Americans are at last realising the threat which the Fascist administration of General Farrell offers to the security of the Western Hemisphere. The State Department now appears set on some kind of sanctions—presumably a political and economic boycott—which, if carelessly handled, can aggravate rather than lessen the danger. The crisis in Argentina is not due merely to Axis intrigue or to the ambitions of a small group of officers; its roots go deep into the politics and the economy of Latin America. Argentine suspicion of the United States and of Brazil is as old as the century. Neither this powerful nationalism nor the economic crisis which is affecting Argentina even more heavily than her neighbours can be met effectively by denouncing her foreign policy or by intensifying the influences which have produced that crisis. The conflict between Pan-Americanism—led by the United States—and *Hispanidad-America* under Argentine leadership, has now reached a climax, which some day, even without this war, was inevitable. The State Department will not avoid this issue by waving the flag of hemisphere unity and talking as if the Argentine people are deprived of its benefits by a scheming dictatorship. On the contrary, only a small minority of them yet realise that their country can have no real political future unless it discards its false sense of "Continental leadership." At the moment, flag-waving is more likely to be taken as another version of Yankee stick-wagging, and nothing could be better calculated than this to rally support for General Farrell. On the other hand, the motives for British reluctance to support Mr. Hull are not entirely disinterested, though our insistence upon the importance of Argentine trade to the war-effort is likely to prove a powerful argument against hasty or drastic action. Now the serious prospect in Latin America is appreciated, the time has come for a thorough reconsideration of British and American policy.

The L.C.C. Gives the Right Lead

The L.C.C. Education Committee has been making educational history by deciding to embark on a full-scale programme of multilateral secondary schools. "Comprehensive High Schools," the report calls them; and they are to be designed to "provide for all pupils equal opportunity for physical, intellectual, social and spiritual development." In other words, the class distinction between Grammar School and Senior School education is to be broken down in the L.C. schools, and in addition negotiations are to opened up with the independent and grant-aid schools in the area with the object of induc them to fit themselves into the new plan. T Moderate minority opposed these recommen tions, arguing that the L.C.C. had no right to educational reform as a means of breaking d class divisions, and trying to reinforce this dang ous contention by asserting that multilat schools would be too big for social education, appealing to the teachers on the ground bigger schools would mean fewer headmasterships The majority, of course, recognised that it take time to introduce the new system on a co prehensive scale, and accordingly made propos for temporary grouping of existing schools, w a sharing of as many activities as possible, pen ing the erection of the new buildings that will needed. This is a grand lead to the rest of country, and the one way that will in practi prevent a stigma of inferiority from attaching the new secondary schools as against the existi schools of Grammar School type. There will complications in fitting Technical Education co pletely into the multilateral pattern; but they be straightened out. All honour to the L.C Education Committee for giving so excellent lead.

Co-operative Projects

The English and Scottish Co-operative Whol sale Societies have now issued their prelimina proposals for amalgamation. In 1943 the C.W trade amounted to over £157 millions, and t of the S.C.W.S. to about £35 millions; and the totals included £47 millions and £11 millions goods produced in the factories of the two centr Of the two, the S.C.W.S. has the more progress record, Co-operation in Scotland being, on t whole, a good deal more adventurous and co scious of its social ideals than Co-operation England. There is obviously much to be s for the closer union of the two Wholesales, order to enable the Co-operative Movement make a big new forward drive after the war. T only question is whether a single body as w as the combined society would be could esca the dangers of top-heaviness and undue centr isation of control. If amalgamation could be co bined with greater autonomy for the main depa ments, so as to spread responsibility more wide it might produce excellent results. Both t S.C.W.S. and the C.W.S. have already embark on retail trade on a substantial scale, usually taking over local societies which have got in trouble. There is now a demand for somethi in the nature of a Co-operative "Woolworth," at least a Co-operative "Marks and Spence designed to strengthen the position of Co-oper tive trading outside the food trades, to which t bulk of it is at present confined. There is a a parallel move for linking up the local sto into larger district societies, capable of runni effective department stores in all the bigger town and for the development of a mail order busine to compete with private traders in this hither untilled field. With this week's purchase of a store in Oxford Street by the London Co-oper tive Society, Co-op. business breaks into the We End for the first time.

PARLIAMENT: Going, going . . .

Wednesday afternoon

THE Prime Minister, growling, had to put his war review for a couple of hours so t Shinwell could oppose the formal motion that t summer recess should last seven weeks. It not only the usual Left-wing dissidents w thought that the three weeks proposed Shinwell would be a more seemly period for w most people think of as a holiday, at this stage the war: Winterton, Norman Bower, and M Tate were among Tories who voted against t Government.

On the previous day, point was lent to Shinwe view by the adjournment until after the recess

second reading debate on the Housing emporary Accommodation) Bill—obviously an ent, though inadequate, measure. This short ek was unduly clogged with business (largely ing to the unexpected incidence of what may called the "Morrison Shelter" Bill), and illink did not rise till late in the day to introduce Housing Bill. He got a rough welcome. terruptions were incessant. Members were rturbed by his announcement of the names of five firms that are to make the steel bungalows, his estimate of ten years as the *average* life of se "temporary" houses (i.e., many will be in much longer), and by their miniature size. two most impressive speeches were by Megan yd George (who made the good point that se bungalows would presumably be built on d earmarked for new building, so where would permanent houses go, so what became of nning?); and by Sir Jonah Walker-Smith (who npared the 600 sq. ft. superficial area of the rtal bungalow with the 900 sq. ft. accepted by the Government as an "irreducible minimum" 25 years ago. He also debunked admirably, from practical experience, the Bill's costing clause as a safeguard against profiteering by contractors.

At question-time the unfortunate affair of a civilian bicycle, damaged a year ago at Sutton Coldfield by an R.A.F. vehicle, was raised for the second time and cleared up. There were questions about Marsala imports and sweets for child evacuees, about German vandalism in Italy and the price of beer in Normandy. From his cell at Brixton Captain Ramsay has sent in a number of questions about music, including the following:

> To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that, under the chairmanship of Sir Victor Schuster, the Radio Music Council has been overburdening the musical programmes for the Forces with renderings characteristic of Oriental and African races; and whether he will ensure that programmes shall contain a greater proportion of music characteristic of the white races, and especially those inhabiting the British Islands.

PONTIFEX MINOR

NEW MEN IN TOKIO

HE vociferous crisis which shook Nazi rmany to its foundations without, however, posing of Hitler, and the noiseless earthquake ich neatly unseated General Tojo without ibly disturbing the Japanese surface, followed closely upon each other, that one was tempted look for an analogy in the dynamics of totalian government which would explain both. t the parallel is, in fact, superficial and accital. The further the war moves on, the rer it becomes how little the two systems e in common, how artificial is their contion, and how swiftly catastrophic events in h hemispheres are driving them apart. What t there was between Hitler and Tojo, snapped El Alamein and Stalingrad.

n Japan, the long struggle of the military the total usurpation of governmental power process of slow but steady penetration—med to have ended in triumph when, in bruary 1944, Tojo emerged as a combined mier, War Minister, Chief of the Army Staff, Minister of Munitions, with most of the aining key posts in his Cabinet in the hands representatives of the Army and Navy. Five nths later, on July 18th, came a change which wed that the military had overshot the target. neral Koiso has, once again, separated civilian n service portfolios and restored the balance hin a top-heavy Cabinet.

What went wrong in Japan? The statement en out by the official Japanese Information reau, after Tojo's resignation, compares oddly h the four-point programme issued by the iso Cabinet. The former stated that Tojo ed, amongst other things, because he neglected give the Japanese people "full opportunity employ their irresistible enthusiasm for an out war effort." The latter demands "more e for free expression of opinion in public, rder to raise the people's morale and fighting it." Whatever the truth may be—whether people lagged behind the Government or Government behind the people—it is clear there was something wrong with morale and government and people were beginning drift apart in so dangerous a fashion that it ame necessary to change the Government. ring three years of personal government in ch he bullied the Japanese people first into eard of military successes and then into ally staggering defeats, Tojo had laboured duously to change the people into a mute, dient, voiceless mass. The first thing his cessor finds it necessary to do, in order to ure popular support, is to make a concession public opinion. It is significant that among Ministers dropped is Amau, Tojo's Propada Minister, and that his successor, Ogati, e-President of the Tokyo paper *Asahi Shim*- is a newspaperman.

nly three members of the Tojo Government have been retained. They are Finance Minister Ishiwata, an expert technician of the calibre of Dr. Schacht, who showed his skill during his term as Financial Adviser to the Nanking Government; Fujiwara, who was Minister without Portfolio and has now become Munitions Minister, one of Japan's leading industrialists who will have to straighten out the arms production muddle inherited from Tojo himself; and finally Shigemitsu, the Foreign Minister. His re-appointment is perhaps the most interesting of all as it indicates a new ascendancy of the Japanese Foreign Office and its professionals over the rash and tempestuous Empire-builders of the Aoki school who carved their magnificent-looking Ministry for Greater East Asiatic Affairs out of the Foreign Office, expanded it into a mammoth organisation for the control of all subjugated Asia, and left the Foreign Office shorn of most of its functions, crippled and impotent. Shigemitsu, Japan's last Ambassador in London, is now getting his own back. The two Ministries are now combined in his person, which means that the Greater East Asia Ministry, having narrowly escaped dissolution, has been brought back under the control of more orthodox Foreign Office methods. The effects of this change may soon become apparent in Japan's dealings with the occupied countries in general and their quisling governments in particular. There is more than one indication that the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" needs some drastic cleaning up and straightening out of what looks like administrative chaos. The sudden and entirely unexplained proclamation of martial law in the Philippines, only recently declared an independent republic by the grace of Tokio, is but one of them.

The three new men who have taken over from Tojo—Premier General Koiso, Navy Minister Admiral Yonai, and War Minister General Sugiyama—are made of very much the same stuff as Tojo himself. If they are changing the country's administration from one-man government to something approximating more closely to team-work and joint responsibility, it is not because they see it as their task to wind up the war. Their four-point declaration makes it clear that they intend to carry on the war in an all-out effort. Tojo's goal, the defeat of Britain and the U.S.A. on land and at sea, is unattainable. Victory for Japan must mean from now on to hang on to the booty with all their might and try to get through this war without having to give up too much of it. The Koiso Government has not come into office to complete Tojo's mission. Its task is to preserve its gains without, at the same time, ruining the people. Events are likely to show that the two are incompatible, and Tojo who, unlike Hitler, has had someone to hand on the impossible job, may feel lucky to be well out of it.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WHAT is a Public School? Most of us have been through the experience of explaining to surprised foreigners that when we say "Public School" we mean something much nearer its opposite. But we do not mean quite its opposite; for there is a considerable class of Private Schools that can be contrasted with the Public Schools almost as legitimately as the Public Schools can be with schools conducted under the auspices of the public. A Public School, in our peculiar national usage, is in fact a school conducted neither by the public nor for private profit, but under some sort of trust, and is normally also taken to mean a school which chooses its pupils from more than a single locality. In this latter sense it is contrasted with "local Grammar School," though some of the big Grammar Schools have always, or for a long time, been more than local, and a good many Public Schools have developed out of Grammar Schools which have gone up in the world and become more than local, often sloughing off in the process most or all of their responsibility for the higher education of boys in their own areas.

Public Schools need not be boarding Schools, but most of them are undoubtedly schools mainly for the children of the well-to-do. This applies to the Girls' Schools as well as to the Boys' Schools, which are usually thought of first. It would be a mistake to say that more than a very few schools, for either boys or girls, are predominantly schools for the rich—for the very good reason that there are not nearly enough rich people to go round. Most of them are mainly middle-class schools, and some of them charge quite modest fees and are frequented by the children of middle-class people with very modest incomes. A sprinkling of children from working-class homes finds its way into many of the day schools, and a few of the boarding schools, especially those on the borderline between the Public Schools and the local Grammar School type. But the working-class boy who does this is usually on his way out of the working class; and the working-class girl who does it is usually on her way to becoming a teacher. The general run of Public School pupils are recruited mainly from the middle class, and the stream of young persons who emerge from them pour almost wholly into the middle class.

Alongside the Public Schools, which in most cases take their entrants at 13, stands the heterogeneous group of Preparatory Schools—preparatory, in a highly exclusive sense, for the Public Schools. The curriculum in these schools is widely different from that of the State or grant-aided Primary Schools to which the bulk of children go; and the entrance examination for Public Schools does not fit in at all with the curriculum of the primary schools, or of the Senior Schools which take children from them at eleven. Here is the sharpest barrier of class-exclusiveness in the whole educational system. A boy or girl from a Primary School can go easily to a State Secondary School, but not to a Public School. Of course the barrier is not absolute. Many Public Schools have junior departments to which a pupil can go from a Primary School, and so acquire between 11 and 13 what is needed for entrance to a Public School. But this is not too easy; and in practice it has made only a small breach in the exclusiveness of the Preparatory-cum-Public School system.

The question with which the Fleming Committee on the Public Schools was appointed to deal was the place, if any, which these schools should occupy in our new and supposedly democratic system of secondary education. Its terms of reference were weighted on the conservative side. It was not asked to say whether or not the Public Schools should continue, but how "the association between the Public Schools and the general educational system of the country could be developed and extended." It was thus assumed that such development and extension were desirable; and the Committee was called on to

report only on the means whereby this should be done. The Fleming Committee has stuck to its reference. Its Report is full of lush periods in praise of the beauties of the Public Schools generally, of the boarding schools in particular, and of the magnificent spirit of religion which perfumes the Public School atmosphere (we confess that we failed to notice this in our own young days). But, if one leaves out the decorations and considers only the Committee's positive recommendations, it can be said that they have answered the question they were asked, and have not dealt with the much wider questions which must have been in some of their minds.

Briefly, what the Fleming Committee proposes is that *all* Public Schools, not by compulsion but by voluntary act which any school is left free not to take, should become formally "associated" with the State system of education in one of two ways. Public Schools which are predominantly day schools should, under Scheme A, either abolish all fees or adopt an approved scale of fees varying down to zero, according to the parents' means. They should agree to reserve a number of places, varying from case to case, for pupils from the Primary Schools in their areas; but for the rest they should be free to choose their own pupils, subject to a proviso that "there should be no exclusion of pupils on other than reasonable grounds." In return for these concessions, the schools in question should have their revenues made up, in respect of places reserved for pupils from Primary Schools by the L.E.A.'s concerned, and in respect of other places by the Board of Education.

Public Boarding Schools would come under Scheme B. They would have, subject to some reservations, to assign at least 25 per cent. of their places to bursars coming from Primary Schools, either under agreements with particular L.E.A.'s or, more generally, under a national system of selection of bursars managed by the Board itself. They would receive grants, not on a fixed scale, but varying according to the costs at each particular school, subject to a scrutiny of the reasonableness of these costs by the Board. This provision is designed to enable schools with high staffing ratios or salary scales, or other high costs not due to luxurious living, to maintain their superior standards which come under the plan. These schools would continue to charge fees, and would presumably be allowed to remain a preserve of the well-to-do, except for the 25 or more per cent. of places assigned to bursars, some of whom might be themselves children of well-to-do parents.

Over and above this, the Fleming Committee, which has a lyrical section about the bounties of boarding school education, wants the L.E.A.'s to start boarding schools of their own, under the State scheme, on an extensive scale, not only in scattered areas, where the need is obvious, but for children from any part of the country. It is not argued that boarding schools are better for all children than day schools, though whoever drafted the Report obviously comes near to this belief; but it is argued that a very large extension of boarding education is needed, and that this need is on a scale which the Public Schools are quite unable to meet.

These are the main features of the compromise. The effect would be to make a considerable bridge from the State Primary Schools to the Public Schools, both day and boarding, though much would depend on how the scheme was actually worked, and in particular on two features in it. The first of these is the method of selection of pupils for crossing the bridge. The Committee disclaims any wish to make this selection by a process of choosing the cleverest, but is not at all clear about what it proposes instead. The danger of this is that, if brains are not the test, the easiest alternative is to choose those who show most eligibility for being turned into little gentlemen and ladies; and if this were the line actually followed, the effects would be socially disastrous in the extreme. This country does need more and better trained brains; but the last thing it needs is disappointed gentlemen and ladies to provide recruits for Fascism when they fail to get jobs better then their brains deserve. The second feature is closely connected with the first. In an endeavour, one presumes, to save the Preparatory Schools, it proposes transfers to them, at 11, of pupils selected at that age for entry to a Public School at 13. Surely it would be infinitely better for the children in question to spend two years at an ordinary Secondary School, instead of being transplanted at 11 into a gents' or ladies' establishment, where they could learn deportment. No doubt, the idea is that they should also learn Latin and other subjects which belong to the Public School curriculum; but ought not the Public Schools, if they are to be really associated with the general system of education, so to modify their own curricula as to be able without difficulty to take pupils who have spent a couple of years in a State Secondary School? If this is not done, the class system in one of its worst features will be left intact.

The wider question, of course, is whether the whole thing is desirable or not. Do we want to make it easier for boys and girls to get from the Primary to the Public Schools? In the case of the day schools, the answer is plainly "Yes." But could not this best be done by putting them in precisely the same relation to the L.E.A.'s as the general run of local Grammar Schools which are aided but not fully taken over by the L.E.A.'s? There would no doubt have to be provision for several neighbouring L.E.A.'s to concern themselves with schools serving fairly wide areas; but this presents no difficulty. The boarding schools, however, cannot be dealt with in this way. The question, in this case, is whether it would not have been better to leave them as they are—some quite independent of the State and some aided by "Direct Grant" from the Board—and to allow the L.E.A.'s, if they so desire, to build up a system of State Secondary Schools for boarders just as they have built up their day schools since 1902. The Public Schools for boarders are not quantitatively important: they can make no substantial contribution towards solving the problem of boarding school education for those who need it from the lower income groups. It would have been far wiser to let them alone for the time being, instead of embarking on a highly questionable experiment in assimilation. Perhaps, in the case of the schools for the rich, this is what will happen; for even if the Government accepts the Fleming Report, there is to be no compulsion, and Harrow, Eton, Winchester, Roedean, Wycombe Abbey and the other blue ribbon boarding schools will be free to say "No, thank you," if they would sooner go their own way.

THE INDIAN OUTLOOK

On reading over Friday's debate in the Commons on India, we tried for half an hour a difficult but stimulating experiment. We imagined that nature had sent us into this world with brown skins as involuntary subjects of the King-Emperor. Read from this angle, there were speeches from both sides of the House that compelled our sympathy and even our gratitude. The best of them came from the Tory benches: it was the ghastly account which Professor A. V. Hill, as a physiologist fresh from his stay in India, gave of its bill of health, its mortality from preventible diseases, its semi-starvation, its barely imaginable poverty. Seldom if ever, since the early days of the John Company, has any Member of his eminence said so much to shatter Imperial complacency. Several of the other speeches were kindly and in their way helpful, notably that of Mr. Pethick-Lawrence, who with many apologies for mentioning the subject at all, suggested, without demanding, the release of the Congress prisoners. But it was in reading not the hostile but the friendly speeches that our patience, as temporary Indians, all but gave way. No voice spoke in a tone of urgency. No Member, not even the honester of them, seemed to realise that over the greater part of India, British rule is naked autocracy. Six provinces, including some of the most populous and the most advanced, are without a vestige of self-government. And still the leaders of the party which had an electoral majority in these provinces languish in our gaols untried. The Empire which dares in this way to rule its hundreds of millions without their consent has as its long range record of achievement the permanent physical misery which Professor Hill described: chalked up upon its recent score is the death of 800,000 victims of a needless, man-made famine in Bengal. Against this foreground and background Mr. Amery's lavish promises of freedom, but only after the war, moved us as temporary Indians to anger, and even to nausea.

The net effect of Mr. Amery's speech was to shatter any hope that Mr. Churchill's Government will adopt a policy of conciliation. He ignored altogether the gentle, muted suggestion of an amnesty that came from the Labour Front Bench. He dismissed Mr. Gandhi's surprising and hopeful change of front on the ground that he has made no "constructive" offer. And yet he has offered peace to the Muslim League by conceding its central demand, and ended his rebellion against the British Raj by offering to serve under the Viceroy as a "constitutional monarch." What is it, then, that Mr. Amery demands? Does he expect Indians who respect themselves to serve under Lord Wavell as an autocrat? Or is he waiting for some precise lawyer's outline of the new relationship? If that is what he wants, it is unreasonable to demand it until the Mahatma can consult the imprisoned Working Committee of Congress. Lord Linlithgow's refusal to meet Mr. Nehru and Dr. Azad during the Cripps negotiations contributed largely to their failure. Lord Wavell seems also to stand aloof at a critical moment.

Mr. Amery chose to devote most of his speech to a promise of economic planning for India. This new attitude, after the neglect of the past and the long adherence of Delhi to *laissez-faire*, is certainly to be commended. But the white stranger cannot do the planning for India. Any plan that begins to cope with Indian poverty will have to shake Indians out of old habits and customs; it will have to enlist their patriotism in a mighty national effort: it will have to overcome some anti-social forces entrenched in their own society. These things a foreign bureaucracy cannot do. Only a popular national government rooted in the pride and affection of the masses could do all this. Mr. Amery, in words, disclaimed the intention of offering his economic plans, which are to run for fifteen years, as a substitute for political freedom. The suspicion haunts us, none the less, that this is precisely what he is doing, perhaps unconsciously.

Indian public opinion has, meanwhile, scored a slight success. Mr. Jinnah, after many years of bitter public animosity, has consented to meet Mr. Gandhi. The speech in which he received the Mahatma's olive-branch was, none the less, a shocking performance. Not one friendly or kindly word qualified its ill-nature and its suspicion. If anything is to come of a meeting accepted in this spirit, all the charity and grace will have to be supplied by Mr. Gandhi. While we await it with no lively hopes, we must beware of a current misunderstanding. Mr. Gandhi has not "accepted" Pakistan. On the contrary, he stipulated in the terms submitted to Mr. Jinnah for full freedom for public discussion of it. What he has accepted is the right of the Muslim provinces to decide their fate by a free plebiscite. But he may doubt, as we do, whether any of these provinces really want separation. The future will look hopeful only when Indians, in this as in larger matters, are permitted to decide their own destiny.

A LONDON DIARY

SOME things which one wouldn't think credible are true. When I inquired who would hold important positions in the British Civil Administration of occupied Germany, I learnt that the present intention is to put at the very head of our administration Mr. Kirkpatrick, who has worked, with considerable executive skill, at the Foreign Office and the B.B.C. during the last three years. He is a Catholic by religion, and a cynical reactionary in politics. Secondly, I hear that an important figure on one of Shaef's Education Committees, who may become Chief Education Officer in Germany, is Lt. Col. G. R. Gayre. I first heard of Gayre as the only Englishman who agreed with the racial philosophy of the Nazis, and he himself says that he lectured on the subject in Germany. In case I should be doing him an injustice, I have just looked up his new book (entitled *Teuton and Slav on the Polish Frontier*, published by Eyre and Spottiswoode). I need say no more than that he speaks of Professor Guenther's "authoritative work on German Racial Science," and bases his views about the post-war world on strictly racial lines. I cannot believe that this appointment can really be made.

* * *

The British press has not, I think, paid enough attention to the B.B.C. version of recent events in Germany. Perhaps it regards it rather as an ingenious piece of reconstruction than as "hard news." The theory that Zeitzler, Chief of Staff, and Fromm, head of the Reserve army, were deeply implicated does, to my mind, seem well borne out by the fact that both these key generals have disappeared quietly and been superseded, while Nazi propaganda has laid stress on the execution of their immediate subordinates. Beck's alleged suicide also suggests that the Nazis are anxious to persuade the German people that the conspirators were all retired, bowler-hatted generals and not active and responsible army leaders. But when it comes to implicating Helldorf, the Nazi police president of Berlin, notoriously involved in the Reichstag fire, and one of the truest and most loyal of Hitler's henchmen, I feel sceptical. I add one deduction which is entirely my own. Some doubt was felt at first whether there had ever been a plot to kill Hitler at all or whether it was not merely a "provocative incident" invented to justify the purge of generals. I became sure that there really was a bomb when the Nazis gave out that Hitler's trousers had been blown off. Even German propaganda, humourless as it is, could not have deliberately made up that particular detail.

* * *

To me the first indication that something of the kind was brewing was the removal of Rundstedt from the Western Command. I noted here on July 15th that the Nazis were not taking any chances that generals might decide, like Ludendorff in 1918, that surrender was better than a hopeless fight that would destroy the German army. But an expert, who has made a much more thorough search of the German press, has convinced me that the anti-war and anti-Nazi feeling in Germany goes deep and that the generals knew the public would support them, if Hitler were dead—especially if his death looked like an accident. It is because everyone in Germany senses the war that during the last few weeks the process of passing over complete civil and military control to Gauleiters of proven Nazi loyalty has been greatly accelerated. These Gauleiters have not only dictatorial powers over all party organisation, including the Labour Front; they are also Commissioners of Defence and of civil administration. Thus in Bavaria Giesler has been acting as Prime Minister; in Berlin Goebbels is now "President," and Mutschman has similar powers in Saxony. Recently Hitler has broken Prussia up into regional dictatorships. With the same object of countering revolution by decentralisation under party leaders Himmler went himself on July 4th to install Gauleiter Jordan as Oberpresident. A few days later Jordan explained to the staff of his new office that he would use his new powers against all the "unpolitical." "The saying of the *Kampfzeit* (period before 1933) 'be political or die' applies with special urgency to-day." He also attacked officials "who wear masks."

* * *

The same story is repeated all over Germany. In Wuppertal, in the Ruhr, for instance, a whole batch of new town councillors have been appointed "not to represent certain groups or social classes, but only with one task, set them by the party, namely to fulfil their Nazi aims." They had to take a special oath to Hitler. Official threats have been redoubled. In Essen a special denunciation was directed against those who "would try to undermine the German nation from within" and who "raise their hand against the Reich and its Führer"; special "squads of party leaders" have been created to be "available to the Gauleiter by day and night," and elaborate plans were recently made at an S.S. conference to educate the S.A. men to "fight unconditionally for the Nazi movement and ideology." On July 20th, *Front und Heimat*, the soldiers' paper, actually had to deny the existence of any "organisation hostile to the State which could actively and with any prospects of success work for a revolution," and gave, as an example of the few "political madmen and obscure outsiders" who plotted against Hitler, the case of "four medical students who, in their turn, won over four sixth form boys with whom four girls sympathised. They wanted to submit what they called a plan for the salvation of Germany, *via* a foreign bishop who was to hand it to Churchill at the very moment of defeat." These misguided students and the man who was to take the plan abroad "walked straight into the net of the Gestapo."

* * *

That political opposition exists which was involved in the conspiracy is clear from the price that the Nazis put upon the head of Gördeler, who is a prominent politician. There is reason too to think that the Nazis fear working-class opposition. I have before me a report from a Socialist underground group which was smuggled out in April. It states that there is of course no organised resistance on a national scale, though two abortive attempts have been made recently to link up dissident workers with Catholics, Liberals and the Generals. Both were discovered—which accounted for eight of the political executions which are often announced in the German press. The report goes on to say that "the apathy will continue so long as the only perspective so far presented to the German people is unconditional surrender." It is no longer that phrase that matters; the need is to say what the Allies will do when the surrender takes place. We need to turn a despairing hatred of the war into an active hope that things will be better when they end it.

* * *

It seems that toddlers of five or thereabouts are the most criminally careless section of the population. They have learnt to let go of mother's hand, but have not yet discovered that the world is full of murder. So they formed a high proportion of the 632 persons killed on the roads of this country during the merry month of May. Presumably, unless something drastic is done to restrain these negligent infants, the slaughter will be greater after the war, when each of us, fulfilling his personal dream of reconstruction, brings out the old car and once again asserts his right to the freedom of the King's highway. Or can it be—I say it with the misgivings of a motorist, who has never yet happened to commit child slaughter—can it be that the motorist rather than the children needs restraint? Perhaps we should forbid motoring on roads where children run out of houses and pedestrians (out-of-date people though they are) still find it necessary to obstruct our passage? Weight is given to this view by the news that enterprising motor manufacturers hope to provide us with cars that will easily do 120 m.p.h.

Even now people do not realise how serious this road slaughter is. Lord Samuel in a first-class debate in the House of Lords last week recalled that:

> During the present war the number of men of all Services killed and wounded was no fewer than 370,000. On the roads in the same period during this war the number of people killed and injured was 588,000.

Fifty per cent. more killed on the roads than in all the air, sea and land battles. Join the Army and be safe from the motorist! It's a staggering thought, and though I agree with Lord Brabazon that a lot can be done by scientific examination of the intricate factors of types of road, and pedestrian crossings and so forth, Lords Cecil and Samuel are unanswerably right when they say the real trouble is that to allow motoring on pedestrian roads is as silly as allowing pedestrians on railway tracks.

* * *

One reason for our quiet acceptance of these astounding figures is that we all judge by our own bit of experience. It's all the fault of road hogs, of the pedestrians, of the motor cyclist or what not. I am battling with an illogical conviction that it is all the fault of the American army driver. That is because I've seen him in action several times lately. The other night, for instance, we only just had time to flatten ourselves against the hedge to let the jeep pass. I signalled violently to the driver to slow down. The next bend is sharp, and no driver on earth could get round it at that speed. A moment later there was an odd kind of crunching noise. I ran and, sure enough, there was the jeep in the hedge; it had just missed a telegraph post, and the men in it were less hurt than you'd expect. The engine was still running, and the driver was trying to back out without noticing that one of his passengers was hurt under the car. He had a chunk of his face torn off and was the only one we had to carry into the neighbouring farm. I've seen him since with nothing worse than a large scar. He is a quiet farm labourer whom I knew well in the pub. That was one incident. It brought to my mind others. A girl, for instance, standing by the road swearing at an American lorry that had just come head on, filling up all the space on the off side so that she only escaped by jumping off her cycle and getting into the ditch. I did not report what she said at the time as I thought it bad for Anglo-American relations. A doctor I know also escaped death in his car by stopping at the side of the road in time for the oncoming lorry to pull up just in front of him on his wrong side. He was calm, but explicit. "I hope," he said, "that the next car you run into will be a tank"—which was forcible, if not courteous. But, I must remind myself, the rebuke would have been equally fair applied to many English drivers.

* * *

The comment of the unthinking will be that we must straighten out the rolling English road as no longer suitable for the rolling English or American drunkard in a petrol-propelled vehicle. No remedy could be so futile or so damaging. These twisting country lanes are less dangerous than straight macadamised highways. The effect of straightening and widening roads is that motorists attain ever higher speeds and the accidents are more frequent and more serious. It is on the big roads where madmen—and most motorists have been mad at some period of their motoring careers—overtake each other at a hundred-odd miles an hour. The three lane highway is a death-trap and the four-lane only good if it is purely a motoring road with no other traffic on it; to widen the country road, used by all, into a speedway is criminal.

* * *

I have in front of me a franked envelope sent out by a business firm with the following slogan stamped on it "Follow Churchill." Is this the beginning of an electoral campaign?

CRITIC

PLANNING THE NEW CITY OF LONDON

It was as early as November 1940—even before the worst devastation had taken place—that the Improvements and Town-planning Committee of the City of London Corporation began to study the problem of rebuilding. As they worked, the City was coming more and more closely to resemble the ruins of Pompeii. It was even beginning to remind one of the English countryside. Purple loose-strife and evening-primroses waved in the breeze. The open sites were a challenge to the creative powers of the citizens of London.

What is the problem which the Town-planning Committee should have set out to solve? In the first place it is a technical problem. Town-planning must begin with an analysis of all those economic and social factors which have a bearing on future development. In the case of the City, the financial and commercial nerve-centre not only of Britain, but of the Empire and of the world, such an analysis could not be limited only to local considerations. It demands the study of national, regional and local factors: national, in the sense of a survey of the tie between the City and the possible movement of commercial administration: regional, in the sense of close collaboration with the County of London: local, in the sense of a detailed analysis of these activities, both commercial and industrial, that for many years have been carried on in the City, often under most unsuitable conditions.

But functional considerations alone are not enough. The problem is also an æsthetic one. With so many large areas to be completely rebuilt, there is an opportunity, such as will never recur, to lay out the City with imagination and vision.

Last week, on July 26th (this day might in future be made a Day of Mourning for City workers) the Improvements and Town-planning Committee submitted their Preliminary Draft Proposals.

There are four principal proposals put forward rather nervously: a new traffic artery from the Tower round the north of the City to Holborn Circus, "with major junctions where intersected by the principal existing radial roads into the County"; a continuation of the Embankment from Blackfriars to London Bridge, and thence as a wide inland street to Tower Hill; the better display of Saint Paul's Cathedral; and a proposed system of zones for "Commercial," "General Business" and "Special Business." (Someone whispers Big, Bigger and Biggest Business.)

Apart from these proposals, however, the plan consists of rebuilding the City on its old confused network of lanes, widening these indiscriminately so as to make it possible to increase the height of the buildings.

There is little evidence either of any comprehensive analysis or of æsthetic appreciation. One can understand the desire of the City Corporation "to see the return to the City at the earliest possible date of those businesses which have been displaced by enemy action," and one can appreciate their sense of urgency, but one can have no sympathy with their very unimaginative approach. Mr. F. J. Forty, the City Engineer, makes a scathing defence of the "practical" as against the "artistic" outlook upon the problem. But there is no reason why a fine artistic conception for the rebuilding of the City should not be practical. And, if one refers to the plan proposed, surely the siting of markets, wharfs and warehouses without relation to a wider plan is not practical. Nor is a road network that will inevitably lead to congestion.

Any plan for the City must start with a study of the users of the City. We are all familiar with the natural user zones which had developed in the City in pre-war days: we associate Lombard Street with banking, Hatton Garden with diamonds, Garlick Hill with furs and skins, Fleet Street with newspapers, Paternoster Row with books, Leadenhall Street with insurances and shipping, and so on. In the City Corporation's proposals, we should have liked to have seen a full analysis of the requirements of each of these users, and an imaginative plan based on these requirements. Surely this is "practical" planning. In such an analysis, the markets would, of course, come under consideration, and this is clearly a case where regional advantages as well as "City interests" should be considered. It must be remembered that all labour spent on distribution is unproductive, and therefore any unnecessary labour spent on distribution is a loss to the community and each single member of it. The Planning Committee recommend that "the Corporation should have in the forefront of its plans the re-establishment of these specific market areas (Smithfield, Leadenhall and Billingsgate), generally upon the sites on which they previously existed." Yet there would seem to be many advantages in merging Leadenhall (now only 240 yards from the Bank of England) with Smithfield. As for Billingsgate, it seems very difficult to justify its continuation on the present site. There is, of course, no reason why it should be on the river, this situation being merely a reminder that once fishing smacks delivered their catch on the quay-side; indeed, there seems little reason why this market should be in the City at all. In such a case we see the folly of planning the City independently of wider considerations.

Only after the requirements of the users of the City have been analysed is it possible to develop a road plan for traffic, for only then do we know the areas required for each zone, and the demands they will make on traffic routes. For example, a market makes very heavy demands. The Planning Committee's proposals for arterial roads 80 feet wide to the north and south of the City to divert all through traffic from the City itself is sound, although the crossings require further consideration. Their intention, however, to retain the internal network, however wide the roads may be, will lead to endless congestion; the flow of traffic is dependent not so much on the width of a road as on the extent of interruption.

But let us consider the internal planning as a whole, for the traffic lanes cannot be dissociated from a policy towards the built-up areas and the open spaces. There were before the war only 11.5 acres of open space in the City (excluding the Inner and Middle Temples). If the recommendations put forward in the County of London plan—a standard of one acre of open space for 10,000 day population—were applied to the City, nearly 40 acres extra would be required. The City's Town-Planning Committee are loth to surrender any open space, although conceding that "it would be to the common advantage to retain free from building for as long as possible the centre islands or roundabouts"! Yet in their report, after recommending that (with the exception of the neighbourhood of Saint Paul's) buildings 100 feet high, with an 80-feet cornice limit, should replace the old buildings of between 35–70 feet, they reveal that these new buildings would easily accommodate the pre-war tenants of the City without covering all the land. They even confess that "the appropriate use of the back-lands might become a serious problem," for they might "remain long as derelict sites"! To overcome this, they proceed to recommend that residential flats might be built on them.

The important thing, however, is the unwitting confession that open space could be provided in the City; and open space is definitely required. This open space should, I suggest, not take the form of parks, but rather should permeate all the building area. It is the tree outside the office window that is so valuable. After the main traffic lanes have been fixed, could not the space between them be regarded as "precincts" and laid out as a series of courts, varying in scale as they do in the Temple, some quite small and paved, and others larger and laid out as gardens? Small intimate courts, in which business men discussed their business bare-headed, were once a feature of the C... This type of "collegiate" planning offers ... solution which would be both practical ... capable of fine architectural expression.

Why should not the new City be a fine archi... tectural masterpiece? Although the Town-planning Committee is not unmindful of ... historical masterpieces which the City contains and wishes to preserve them, it does not appa... ently envisage the creation of any new mast... pieces. Must we always rely for our art on ... past? With the rebuilding of so many cit... facing our generation, we should make ourselv... conscious of "urban landscape" just as ... eighteenth century was conscious of ... landscape.

The plea that imaginative planning is ru... out by expense is a financial fairy-tale. W... an intelligent system of pooling, the questi... of compensation need hardly arise. We appr... ciate, however, that the City Planning Commit... was handicapped by the lack of a Governme... lead on "the degree to which a planning author... may be enabled to acquire, unite and realloc... or sell or lease land beyond the minimum need... for street improvements."

We are again reminded of the tragic con... quences of the lack of Government planni... policy. But while pressure is being brou... on the Government to give some lead, let ... hope that the City Planning Committee will al... be thinking again. Nothing but a complete ... new attempt will meet the case. The time ... short. The days of the purple loose-strife a... the evening-primroses in the City wastes ... numbered.

RALPH TUBBS, R.I.B.A.

SONGS THE ARMY TAUGHT THE

"There is no doubt of the therapeutic power of singing in numbers." Introduction to the Song Book issued by the Army Bureau of Current Affairs

The songs that once were frowned upon
As lawless and tendentious,
Expressly made for egging on
The brutal and licentious,
The songs that spurred the fighting force
To overstimulation
Now help in the remedial course
In Army Education.

The songs they bawled about the town
Before the Great Rebellion,
The songs of God against the Crown
That heartened the Cromwellian,
The songs of Border rebels famed
For treason and sedition,
The battle march that once inflamed
The Harlech expedition.

Songs of the hothead Jacobite
Against the Hanoverians,
Old-world war-songs that now delight
Aesthetic antiquarians,
The ballads of the Bonnie Prince
That stuck in loyal gorges,
But which have ceased to be long since
A challenge to the Georges.

The rousing battle songs of yore,
Are now dispensed in doses,
A therapeutic treatment for
The battlefield neurosis.
The songs that made fanatics then,
Now serve, when they are idle,
To sublimate in fighting men
The impulse homicidal.

The present conflict is too near,
The issues are too critical
For liberating troops to hear
Songs dangerously political.
But fighting songs of land and sea,
And battles long since ended,
When used in melo-therapy
Are safely recommended.

SAGITTARIUS

GOOD LUCK

ACCORDING to Mr. Alan Moorhead, many of the Germans captured in Normandy are found to be wearing "charms and talismans and an assortment of 'protective-prayers'." I have a fellow-feeling for all superstitious people, but, as I grow older, one of the things that I chiefly notice is that superstition matters to me less and less. I no longer feel that I may darken my future if I get on to a number thirteen bus. I do not care whether I see one magpie flying across a field or two. I should be only slightly perturbed if someone opened an umbrella inside my house or if someone offered me a light from a match from which two cigarettes had already been lit.

I am of the same mind as a barman with whom I discussed superstitions the other day. He said: "My old mother used to throw salt over her shoulder if she spilt some on the table. It's all damned nonsense." Remembering certain relics of human frailty in myself, I murmured: "It's a curious thing, but *I* always throw salt over my shoulder." "And so do I," said the barman emphatically, "but it's all damned nonsense." I agreed with him, and we both conveyed to each other the fact that, whatever we did, we were at least spiritually free from the silly superstitions of our ancestors.

The fact is that throwing salt over the shoulder is a concession to the fears of others rather than a confession of faith in the magical effect of trivial practices. After all, one has to humour human weakness in such things as not presenting people with knives and not leaving one's shoes on the table in their houses. In ordinary life one has few temptations to leave one's shoes on the table; but, when a friend of mine, who was a passenger disguised as a purser on a tramp steamer going through the Dardanelles, committed this enormity, the captain of the ship, he told me, was greatly upset and declared that now they were sure to run into a gale, even if they were lucky enough to escape shipwreck. Nothing catastrophic happened, however; and, having heard the story, I became more and more of a rationalist in such matters.

No. I refuse to become a prey to superstition. If I see a pin lying on the footpath, I do not pick it up. Perhaps I may pick one pin up as a concession to popular belief, but I will not go on picking up pins. At an earlier stage of my life, when I picked up enough pins to keep a tailor's shop supplied; but I found that it did me no good. My salary remained the same as before. My health remained as unamenable to patent medicines as ever. Hence I stopped picking up pins. Except, perhaps, an occasional pin—for luck.

How foolish one used to be! I remember how, years ago, when we had a black cat called Peter, and he had not come in by midnight, I used to stand at the window on the stairs calling for him for an hour at a time, like the child in the temperance ballad, "Father, dear father, come home," and feeling that the recovery of one of the family from illness depended on whether Peter stayed out all night or not. No child with a drunken father ever longed more ardently for the return of a parent than I longed for the return of Peter. And what a lifting of the heart one felt when at last one heard the thud of his weight on the roof of the coalshed, and he came purring through the window! The effect of these midnight returns on the health of the family was so extraordinary, I may say, that it might have made anyone less rational than myself superstitious for life.

As a matter of fact, I will concede to the superstitious that they have many arguments from experience in their favour. How often, having put a sock on inside out in the morning and failing for some atavistic reason refused to change it, I have found nothing disastrous happening to me for the rest of the day! The evidence for superstitious practices is almost as overwhelming as the evidence for psycho-analysis.

Again, when I set out to cross the Atlantic for the only time in my life, a friend presented me with a stone to hang on my watch-chain—it was a cornelian, I think—which was supposed to be a prophylactic against drowning. You may think it an odd coincidence, but the fact is that I sailed not only to Quebec but back from Quebec without anything whatever happening to me. If a chemist found such results repeating themselves again and again in the course of his experiments, would he not proclaim them to the scientific world? To me it seems that, as regards superstition, all the evidence is in its favour. If I disbelieve in superstition, it is not because of the evidence but in spite of it.

Most of us, I am afraid, are merely half-hearted in our superstitions. There is no form of belief with a greater proportion of Laodiceans among its followers. The ordinary man to-day, I am convinced, observes various superstitions, not because he wholeheartedly believes in them, but because he thinks it just as well not to take unnecessary risks. He avoids walking under a ladder and pretends that he does this for fear a pot of paint may fall on him, though it is a well known fact that the only time it is luck to walk under a ladder is when a painter is standing on it. There is a kind of dishonesty in this which compares unfavourably with the simple faith of a savage who believes that if someone steps over his shadow he will die. And we are told that savages have often actually died in such cases. Civilised men do not become martyrs to their superstitious faith in this fashion.

How many of them, for instance, genuinely believe that, if you sit down thirteen at a table, the first person to rise from his chair will die within a year? Yet most of us feel slightly perturbed if we give a dinner party of fourteen and one of the guests fails us. We explain, with our customary lack of candour, that we are not superstitious ourselves, but that we are afraid some of the women may feel nervous; and if we can fetch in an extra guest we do so. I remember sitting in a public-house one evening when the publican, who had been married that day, came into the bar with an anxious face and, finding no one but me, asked me if I would mind going upstairs and joining the wedding party at supper. He said that the bride was in a state of consternation, as supper was ready and there were only thirteen to sit down to it. I went upstairs to play the part of a mascot, and I think I may boast that, merely by sitting down and eating and drinking, I was regarded more or less as the life and soul of the party. It was as though I had saved them from some awful fate, and I felt, as it were, bemedalled by their gratitude. And what an excellent supper it was, consumed with hilarity worthy of the food! As I ate it I felt that the superstition about thirteen had something to be said for it. In a merely rationalistic world I should have missed a banquet—a banquet such as publicans seem to have a special gift for giving.

Only on two occasions have I sat down to a table of thirteen persons; and I confess that on both I felt a mildly queasy sensation—a faint spiritual tremor that, I told myself, was all nonsense. I did not, of course, believe in the superstition, but I would gladly have paid a two-shilling bit for an extra guest. Nor was it pleasant, at the end of the meal, to see a religious unbeliever rising deliberately from his chair in order to challenge a vulgar superstition. It was only after a year had passed, and I learned that none of the company had died, that I felt quite easy about having taken part in an affair that flouted so unnecessarily the powers of darkness. Should I mind dining in a company of thirteen to-day? I wonder. I am not quite sure. Perhaps I would rather not.

One would imagine that superstition must be a characteristic of timid people, but I doubt whether it is commoner among them than among the more valiant. Sailors, for example, are said to be among the most superstitious of men. One reads of sailors who will not go to sea without salt in their pockets, and who believe that, if sails are mended on the quarter-deck, bad luck is sure to follow. Others are afraid of stepping into a boat or on to the shore with the left foot first. Others regard it as unlucky to travel with a coffin on board, and have as firm a belief in the existence of lucky and unlucky days as the disciples of an astrologer. Soldiers, too, have been known to have curious superstitions. During the last war, it was related, the men in a battery noticed, or thought they noticed, that every time a novel by Rider Haggard was sent out to them something catastrophic happened. As a result, they decided that, when any books by Rider Haggard arrived, they should be burnt unread. The result was, as you might have foreseen, unpleasant incidents declined in number immediately.

Boxers are a race of men who believe that fortune favours those who possess the appropriate charms. Carpentier—during at least a part of his career—would not enter the ring unless his manager was wearing a ragged old coat that had brought him good luck for fifteen years. Fitzsimmons always kept a horse-shoe in his training quarters and, according to Mr. Fred Dartnell, ascribed one of his defeats to the fact that his trainer had nailed the shoe wrong way up. Among modern statesmen none have shown greater courage than Parnell, yet he thought green an unlucky colour and is said to have turned pale when some women admirers presented him with a smoking cap of the traditional Irish hue.

It is no wonder, then, that human beings of less daring character shrink from being married in May, are horrified if a picture falls, or think that if they carry a ring made from the hairs of an elephant's tail it will bring them good fortune. I myself, I repeat, believe in none of these things, or perhaps I should say that I do not believe in more than a few of such things, and even then my belief is only a half-belief. One thing I do know, however. Good omens cheer me up. I saw a rainbow the other night and I must admit I felt exactly like Wordsworth.

Y. Y.

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to F. Whipp.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

The Fleming Committee seek to throw open our Public Schools to all comers. Can anyone inform me what they seek to gain by this? I expect every woman would like a diamond necklace—but what would be its value if every woman possessed one?—Letter in *Daily Sketch*.

". . . for without foxes there would be no foxhunting, and without foxhunting many would find it impossible to live through an English peace-time winter."—*Horse & Hound*.

A man fined £10 at the Guildhall to-day, said he only received bets from members of the Stock Exchange inside the Exchange, but during an "Alert" members did their business in the street . . . Inspector Jouning said that if the statement was correct it would appear that Powell was making use of the Stock Exchange as a betting house.—Report in *Evening Standard*.

A word has to be said about the Polish Government in London. It has not heeded the warnings in *Tribune*.—"*Tribune*."

Vicar, private means, wife M.U. enroller, desires country parish. Accept two churches. Sung Eucharist. Main water.—*Church Times*.

Posters advertising "a doodle-bug dance" in Hatfield caused quite a storm in the town. They were torn down by indignant people whose identity is not known . . .

The Rector, who organises weekly dances in the Public Hall for the Forces in the neighbourhood, said the title "doodle-bug dance" was meant to imply that the fun would be fast and furious and that the dance would "go with a bang."—*Herts Advertiser*.

THE MOVIES

"Going My Way," at the Plaza
"English Without Tears," at the Odeon
"The Canterville Ghost," at the Empire

Preferences: silence, black and white, imagination, satire, kisses off-screen, murder, local colour. Even a little of these is enough to make me happy, the worst film, in my experience, being preferable to the worst play; I might even visit the piece that is to follow *English Without Tears* at the Odeon; a drama of "the horse country," of "a young love fresh as the scent of new-mown hay." But there are always the horses.

This week my preference is for *English Without Tears*, or rather for certain aspects of it, because it's not, admittedly, a very good film. We have enjoyed the English abroad (with Asquith), so here is the sequel at home (without). But though this is a comedy of foreigners in England, the joke is still against ourselves. The gentleman at the Foreign Office still believes that all Frenchmen are rakes; we are superior about our pronunciation; dowagers fly to Geneva to plead the cause of migratory birds; lovers have to be told how to go about their business; and the war shows us up as diffident, friendly, calm, conceited, babes. There is a delightful moment when the butler appears beyond the balcony, where the family are at dinner, wearing his bowler and rowing a young lady across the lake; delightful, too, is a later scene when the same butler, now a major, tries to put a few love precepts into practice. But the fun about young ladies and butlers tells in the end against the film, for if the joke is old-fashioned, the sentiment is even more so. Or perhaps it is that I don't find Michael Wilding very sympathetic in either stage, as gentleman's gentleman or as plain gentleman. Penelope Ward and Roland Culver are attractively English; Claude Dauphin and Lilli Palmer put up an even stronger case for being foreign. There are the usual compromises about being caught in a bedroom, softened by a touch of burlesque. This is a rather aimless, but not a boring, film.

Mr. Bing Crosby is one of those dark horses that hide in a blaze of publicity. For years he has been a favourite crooner; for years, disliking crooning, I have avoided him. The only occasions, in fact, when I have seen him willingly have been in partnership with Bob Hope, and then I could have dispensed with his share. He always had a sense of humour, he had style, but for me this was swamped in the slur of sentiment. Well, *Going My Way* still isn't a dish for those who prefer savoury to sweet; but given the sweetness, here is a sentimental comedy that holds its charm for two hours. Mr. Crosby is a young priest, serious and gay with boater, who is sent by his bishop to supersede tactfully the old incumbent (Barry Fitzgerald). These two provide some of the most touching comedy that has been seen on a screen for a long time; and the surprise, to me, is that in this pair Mr. Crosby as an actor easily holds his own. We knew that he could play golf like a pro.; he can act like one, too. This, in fact, is his coming of age. The crooning parts have been worked in most cunningly with the situations; and that also, I must admit, Mr. Crosby does better than anyone else. You will gather that I enjoyed myself at the Plaza despite preferences (see above).

The few good moments in *The Canterville Ghost* are provided by Oscar Wilde: the worried spectre who says, "Excuse me, I must go and gibber in the oriel room.". The rest of the film, with Laughton's ghost in the title role, is creepier than it should be.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

Summer Exhibition at the Lefevre Gallery

This mixed exhibition, while smaller and less varied than those at the Leicester and Redfern Galleries, should not be missed by connoisseurs. A small landscape by Peploe is one of the most charming works we have seen by this eminently honourable artist; Frances Hodgkins has a fine farmyard; there are remarkable Still Lifes by Duncan Grant, George Bergen and Keith Baynes, other interesting paintings by Spencer Gore, Gilman and Anne Estelle Rice. Young Scotland is handsomely represented by Robert Colquhoun and Robert MacBryde, who treat similar subjects with similar palettes. Each is decidedly gifted, and earnest in pursuit of design, but we are so unregenerate as to wish that young painters could find it in their hearts to resume the humanist tradition that has now for a generation been dormant. Women, even when they cut cloth or wear cairngorms, do not make so glum impression as these painters seem to suggest. Now that everyone outside the Royal Academy recognises the importance of design or plastic harmony we look for young painters who can make designs with individuals instead of with generalisations. We do not suggest that Messrs. Colquhoun and MacBryde could or should attempt this, but we remain impatient for a young painter who can. Janet Fyvie is also interesting.

SYMPATHY WITH FLORA

Who, dreaming of "What a beautiful landscape!" sometimes forgets to post my article for THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION *lying at the bottom of her rucksack.*

Dreaming of England,
King Alfred burnt the farm-wife's cakes.
And, for our sakes,
Quite often Jesus missed the last mule home.
Though from efficient Rome,
Even Caesar made mistakes,
And left his boy Britannicus behind.
Milton was blind
To lots of things quite obvious to me,
Yet he could see
Some things worth ten of these.
So, on my knees,
I'll daily pray that I
May not, in dodging puddles, miss the sky.

HARRY ROBERTS

Correspondence

THE FLEMING REPORT

SIR,—I cannot share the enthusiasm of the popular press for the Fleming proposals to earmark and finance a proportion of places in the public schools for ex-elementary school pupils.

The total extent of such provision must of necessity be comparatively small. It seems to me to be merely a sop to the Cerberus of democratic opinion or, from another point of view, a sort of blood transfusion for the ancient establishments.

What would we do thereby? The best (assuming that they really were the best) from our grammar schools would be creamed off from the schools of the people. These schools would be deprived of their most brilliant pupils and natural leaders. Is this wise? I think it crazy.

Furthermore, one of two things would happen to these "selected" representatives of small incomes. Either they would be lost in sympathy and outlook to their own kind or they would take the place of the despised poor relation among the children of the rich. Both things might happen. Both are undesirable.

What then can we do with the public schools? The answer is simple. They are mainly residential schools; therefore let us use them where residence is an essential feature of education. In the reconstruction of the war-torn nations, members of the Services, engineers, diplomats, missionaries, consuls and people like that will serve this country and humanity in all parts of the world. They will wish to secure a British education for their children. They deserve this at least of us; therefore let us use the residential establishments for such children.

As for the others, they can come into the public secondary schools under the new Education Act, which schools it will be then in the interests of wealthy people to make the finest of their kind in the world. It is about time that we began to act as democrats rather than merely to pay lip-service to democracy.

If we have the money to spend (and we have) I think it would be better spent at the post-secondary stage—to increase assistance to students in the Universities, Technical, Agricultural and other institutions of advanced education. It should not be used to give Jimmy Brown of Bermondsey a public school accent and to make him neither flesh, fish, fowl, nor good herring.

MICHAEL GARETH LLEWELYN

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

SIR,—The following statement—to us in this country well-nigh incredible—has been attributed in our press to Lord Buckmaster in the House of Lords: "Take a boy in the elementary school and whip him for something he has done, and all too often he goes whining to his mother. . . . Take a boy in a public school and flog him, perhaps for something he has not done, and one never hears a word about it."

Let me add the following: Were a boy in any school of the United States, public or private, taken and whipped or flogged by a teacher, this is what would happen: the students of the class, possibly of the entire school, would immediately apprise the school principal or members of the Board of Education, demanding the removal of the teacher from his work. The newspapers, and national weeklies, would report the incident publicly. The teacher would be dismissed from his job as unfit to be entrusted to the responsibilities of the education of young people in a democracy. It is further probable that the parents of the child would take the matter to court, instituting charges of assault and battery, and that the offending teacher would be punished by fine or imprisonment.

In the United States, corporal punishment as a part of the educational procedure is strictly forbidden by law. To us such practices in Britain, like the practice of flogging in India, is an indication of national backwardness which shocks and disgusts us. It is true that in the United States, cases of violence against individuals—for example, lynchings—do occur. But all violence, whatever the degree, is against our laws and our convictions. We are ashamed of it. To us flogging, upon whatever pretext, is a barbarous obscenity, suitable to the mentality of fascists perhaps but not to civilised men of goodwill.

Los Angeles. PAULINE G. SCHINDLER

CONDEMNED CELL

SIR,—For nine weeks a mother and daughter lay in condemned cells, under the constant vigilance of "death-watch" wardresses, after being sentenced to death for the murder of the thirteen-days-old illegitimate son of the younger woman. For over seven of these weeks they awaited the decision of the Appeal Court which was finally given against them. Eleven further days were allowed to elapse before the Home Office announced that they had been reprieved four days before the execution date.

Questioned about this eleven days' delay, in a type of case in which no woman has been hanged for a hundred years and in which reprieve can almost be taken as certain, the Home Secretary said "There are some exceptional cases in which it is practicable and right to announce a reprieve within two or three days . . . This case followed the normal procedure. It did not have the accelerated procedure, because I did not think it right that it should."

It is clear from this reply that the additional delay after the appeal had been dismissed was deliberate and avoidable, and that the continuance of the torturing suspense was intended as an extra punishment. On reprieve the death sentence is, of course, commuted to penal servitude for life. Apparently this did not satisfy the Home Secretary who, in this case, applied a further period of mental torture as an extra-judicial punishment. While it is true that our public opinion still tolerates the death penalty, surely it cannot accept a barbarous innovation of this kind without strong protest?

JOHN PATON,
Secretary
National Council for the Abolition of the Death Penalty,
63, Valley Road,
Welwyn Garden City.

THE BALTIC STATES

SIR,—The Red Army is to-day completing the liberation of the Baltic Republics; yet some people are still "regretting" that they should have had to "give up their freedom" and "submit to Soviet imperialism." May I, as a Lithuanian who left his country in August 1939 and has been in touch with his parents and many fellow-countrymen ever since

and can therefore claim to speak with some knowledge of the subject, endeavour to reply to some of the points usually raised?

First, let us recall some of the conditions during the period prior to 1940: since the 1926 "revolution" no vestige of democracy was left in my country. Parliament (or Seim) was elected from people arbitrarily nominated by the government itself; nominees were invariably well-to-do farmers, government officials and catholic dignitaries, all of whom were directly dependent on the government. All Trade Unions were dissolved and many of their active members jailed; a government-run "House of Labour" was instituted in their place (a faithful model of Schickelgruber's and Mussolini's labour organisations); the working population was deprived of all political rights; their standard of living was very low, prices of manufactured goods almost prohibitive. Peasants were forced to sell their produce to government-sponsored private concerns at set prices, and their position became more hopeless every year under the increasing burden of debt to the State. The universities were dominated by the extremely chauvinistic "Young Lithuania" student organisation, openly subsidised from East Prussia. As in the economic sphere, Nazi influence was making itself increasingly felt. Jews and other minorities were gradually eliminated from the economic and cultural life of the country by methods that smacked of anything but democracy. Militarily, the country was absolutely at the mercy of Germany, as witness the Polish ultimatum over Vilna and the Nazi occupation of Memel.

After Lithuania was accepted into the U.S.S.R., "exploitation" began by the handing over to the peasants of the land they had tilled for centuries; by establishing machine-tractor and agronomist-research stations throughout the country and by annulment of all debts to the State. Unemployment was almost completely wiped out within a few months, Trade Unions revived and entrusted with the control over labour, conditions of work, grading of wages, etc. Members of Parliament were put forward and elected directly by the people, with the power of recall (they did not, by the way, have to be members of the Communist Party). More schools and hospitals were built; output of books and newspapers (in several languages) went up tremendously; the number of students in the universities increased considerably, as financial and racial qualifications were no longer necessary. Moreover, through their representatives in the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. and the Council of Nationalities, the Lithuanian people had a direct say in the running of one-sixth of the world—which seems to compare favourably with the period before 1940, when they did not have very much to do with the running of their own country. Most of the ruling clique, incidentally, with the president, Smetona, and a few "patriotic" army generals at their head, absented themselves in a body to the Third Reich, where they were apparently received as friends.

There is no doubt that the peasants and workers of Lithuania voted by an overwhelming majority for joining the Soviet Union entirely on their own free will.

A SOVIET LITHUANIAN

THE INDIAN FAMINE

SIR,—Some of the readers of my NEW STATESMAN AND NATION in India were distressed at an article in your issue of April 8th in which you quoted the Calcutta *Statesman* as saying that "little was done by the voluntary efforts of Indians to combat the famine" in Bengal.

May I suggest, as one who was closely associated with Indian voluntary organisations throughout the famine, that the *Statesman* comment was unfair? In July, 1943, considerably before Government admitted responsibility for feeding destitutes in Calcutta, the Bengal Relief Committee and Marwari Relief Society had set up free kitchens in the City. Similarly, in the winter of 1943-44, in the vital interim period before clothing and blankets could be despatched by Government to the districts to meet the needs of destitutes completely without possessions and suffering severely from cold, it was the Bengal Relief Committee, under the leadership of Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee and others, which put hessian blankets at the disposal of voluntary organisations and local committees.

But perhaps the most impressive work of all which has been undertaken by Indian voluntary societies has been the organisation by the Bengal Medical Relief Co-ordination Committee of mobile medical units in the villages. In a tour of East Bengal which I made in March this year I saw some of these at work. Each Unit consisted of a doctor and three medical students acting as dispensers, inoculators and assistants. Making their headquarters usually in a barn or local hall they would run clinics from 8 a.m. to 12, and from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., and spend the afternoon visiting bedridden patients and inoculating in the villages. They made no claim to luxurious accommodation; no discrimination between rank or religion of those treated; they charged no fees, and desired no publicity. Their average age was about 25, and if such men can be brought into the health administration of India when a National Government is set up we need have no fears for the future of this department at least.

Finally, since in the article referred to, you comment kindly on the work of the Friends' Ambulance Unit in the Bengal famine, may I point out that the Units' children's canteens and rehabilitation centres depended, and still depends ultimately, on the willingness and reliability of Bengali volunteers. At the time of writing, the Unit is maintaining 70 children's canteens in the Province, each of which is run by a local village committee, usually led by a schoolmaster, doctor, or political worker. These receive no emolument, in cash or kind, and in the twelve months for which the scheme has been in operation, not a single case of misappropriation of cash or grains has been found.

It may be suggested that whatever may be said as to the failure of Bengal's political leaders to co-operate during the famine, the work of hundreds of anonymous Indian volunteers, both in organised societies and individually, has been as devoted as anything that has been done by Europeans.

J. R. SYMONDS
Officer-in-Charge Indian Section, FAU.
Friends' Ambulance Unit,
4 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.

SELECTORAL REFORM

SIR,—The Final Report of the Speaker's Conference indicates that we need drastic selectoral reform as well as purely electoral reform. Resolution No. 9 of the report reads as follows:

"The Conference agreed to place on record the fact that they regarded with disapproval the direct or indirect payment or promise of payment of substantial contributions or annual subscriptions to party organisations (including local party organisations) designed to influence the action of such organisations in selecting any particular individual as a Parliamentary candidate."

It will be interesting to watch the effect of this resolution on future Labour Party selections. Will it mean the abrogation of the present "Hastings" rules, which pretend to govern the financing of Labour candidatures? In other words, will it put an end to the virtual sale of the safest Labour seats to the highly subsidised nominees of trade unions and other bodies? As matters stand, there is far less democracy in our selections than there is in our elections.

Llanelly. DAN GRIFFITHS

THE LABOUR PARTY

SIR,—Mr. Mitchell speaks of carrying his researches into the past documents of the Labour Party further and study the resolutions passed by successive Annual Conferences of the Party, also "Socialism and Peace" issued by the Party in December 1934 and reprinted several times since. This

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Programme of Action was passed by the Conference of a United Front of the "so-called" Bevin and Morrisonites and we members of these Conferences for several years fail to see any division of view in these documents which have had the backing of the Trade Unions affiliated to the Party and the 500 odd Divisional Labour Parties as well as some Socialist Societies and one Co-operative Society.

"For Socialism and Peace" a document of 36 pages was a Bibliography of the various Policy reports issued by the Party, including the "Blue" report on Banking and Credit, the "Brown" book on The Nationalisation of the Electricity Supply, the "Red" book on The National Planning of Transport, and the "Green" book on the Industry of Agriculture, and several other documents on vital current economic, political and international questions. These documents have been brought up to date year by year by decision of Party Conference and the document "The Old World and the New Society" (1942) represents a comprehensive treatment of the policy of the Party in war time and for the future.

Fresh documents are constantly being issued. I refer Mr. Mitchell to your Critic's column "A London Diary," page 53, THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, where Critic so very justifiably commends to your readers Labour's new pamphlet "Your Future" and this is but the first of a new series of documents to be issued by the Party. Critic states that this pamphlet is hard hitting and concise, quite rightly urging the widest distribution.

There is no divorce between Bevin and Morrison or the rest of us, for all are subject to the decisions of the Annual National Conference of the Labour Party to which authority both Bevin, Morrison and all other leaders are accountable and responsible. We are all Socialists and our aims are set forth comprehensively in these documents, all who are for us should join us, all who are against us had better join the Tories.

S. J. GEE

S. Kensington.

HITLER AND THE POPE

SIR,—There has been reported by the press—after the attempt to assassinate Hitler—an occurrence which, I believe, is worth while to be put on record for posterity. The Pope of Rome, Pontifex Maximus of two hundred and fifty million Catholics, has congratulated Adolf Hitler, the greatest mass murderer of all times, on his escape from death.

Of course, such demonstration constitutes nothing else but a diplomatic routine between "Heads of States." Yet, the occurrence is significant for its lightening up the spiritual scene of our days. The alleged guardian of all that should be holy, high, faithful and beloved to decent men's senses, does not refrain from expressing satisfaction on an occasion, which failed to eliminate the overlord of all that is common, low, murderous and devilish. The Bishop of Rome calls himself "God's Vicar on Earth." Surely nobody doubts—and certainly the Pope does not—that Hitler is the incarnation of the devil's governorship, and that he deputises for the infernal Prince on this cursed planet. The Ambassador of God, congratulating the Ambassador of the Devil on his lucky escape—what a scene, what a picture, what a feature! Not even the author of Mr. Bolfry could have dreamt that his stage burlesque would be transformed into political and material reality by the foremost spiritual leader of faith and belief.

FREDERICK JELLINEK

FREE THOUGHT AND THE B.B.C.

SIR,—Tyranny seems a curious word to apply to the religious policy of the B.B.C. If it were timidity now it might pass.

I write as one, who quite unworthily, calls himself a Christian. I would myself welcome statements of the more Christian point of view, for I am sure that Christianity has nothing to fear from such attacks. And that, whether Roman Catholic, Anglican or Free Church.

It is not so outworn, feeble or baseless a belief as some of the signatories of the latter in your issue of July 15th apparently hold. I would maintain it as the most reasonable explanation of the universe and the course of history that has yet been put forward. Is not the B.B.C. attitude due to the fear of upsetting the faith of the weaker brethren?

I believe that if a census of opinion could be taken, it would be found that the majority of the nation would be at any rate mildly sympathetic to the Christian faith and not at all conscious of any totalitarian tendency in the B.B.C. religious governing body. I would ask them to allow the Christian position to be attacked; there are plenty of defenders. It will stand, as its founder promised that it should.

THOMAS H. GANDY,
M.B., London

SIR,—There is abundant evidence in the correspondence columns of the *Listener* itself and in what the critic of "The Spoken Word" has written that there will be wide support of the protest made by Dr. Jacks and his co-signatories; but I venture to suggest that these discussions are, and are generally recognised to be, frankly propagandist in the interest of what is called orthodox Christianity, and that scholars of broader religious outlook, and those of non-trinitarian religions could not co-operate with members of the existing "Trust" and their Chairman with profit to those whose questions are considered and to listeners generally. Should not the B.B.C. rather be urged to set up an "open forum" religious Trust of experienced exponents of philosophy and religion, broadly based on human experience? In fairness it should also be said, I think, that the Brains Trust fairly often deals with such questions and that, when it does so, the orthodox view is conspicuously absent from the replies and discussions; no doubt the "Anvic" was intended to serve as an antidote.

F. TALBOT

HUMAN REHABILITATION

SIR,—The letter of the R.A.M.C. sergeant quoted by Michael D. Holloway in your issue of July 8th, voices the frustration that all more creative minds are apt to feel in time of war. War fans hate, which encourages the destructive impulses to flourish at the expense of the more constructive ones.

The sergeant's poetic simile of the brain "like a dandelion seed in a gale" seems to imply that he feels that his creative impulses are forced to stagnate, and are felt by him as being wasted. Inability to concentrate, to listen to music, or to read other than the lightest of literature, indicate the presence of minor mental conflicts. Should such a man on his return to civilian life still find it difficult to adapt to peace conditions, i.e., to resume his cultural and more constructive activities, the remedy would appear to lie in a curative form of therapy such as some form of psychological analysis (that human rehabilitation in the mental sphere which he may feel he needs).

Psychological treatment aims, among other things, at encouraging a man to voice the protests that had arisen around frustration. The accomplishment of this enables the more fundamental and deeply satisfying springs of his nature to become accessible; they had been free to flourish in times of peace, but have had to be temporarily pushed under in time of war. These would then regain complete freedom to flourish afresh unimpeded by even minor symptoms.

I venture to believe that such a psychological approach would in the long run prove infinitely more helpful and lasting than the purely educative one advocated by the sergeant.

London. EX-CAPTAIN, R.A.M.C.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE great Russian novels of the nineteenth century so dominate their scene that we forget they stand on the shoulders of minor figures who would impress the reader in any less fertile literature. One of these minor figures is Nicolai Leskov.* I am not sure whether, considered as a writer of short stories, Leskov can justly be called minor. In England, translations of Aksakov came very late in the day, when his contemporaries like Turgenev and Dostoevski were already established with us. There has been a greater delay in translating Leskov. A small collection of his tales called *The Sentry* was translated by A. E. Chamot and, given to us by Edward Garnett in 1922, but since then nothing else has been published until the present volume of stories called *The Musk Ox** and *The Enchanted Wanderer* was introduced to us by Gorki in 1926. These have been translated by Mr. L. Norman and appear to be the first volume of a series. Those who read *The Sentry* will remember his quality in that terrifying murder story called *The Lady Macbeth of the Mzinsk District* and the bishop's dramatic tale of his mission to Siberia, called *On the Edge of the World*.

Nicolai Leskov was born in 1831 and died in 1895. He was born of mixed class—clergy, merchants and the gentry were his forbears—and this gave him a greater range of observation than was possible to the landowner writers. His origins are not very different from Dostoevski's. For a long period of his life he worked for an Englishman who was managing one of the great estates—the Englishman is amusingly drawn in the tale called *The Stinger* in Mr. Norman's translation—and he travelled all over Russia. When Leskov came to write he had a vast experience of Russian life and custom to draw on, an experience which had been formed without literary intent. He "went to the people" not as a self-conscious intellectual, but as a practical man of affairs. One can see how this worked both advantageously and disadvantageously on Leskov's talent. He is, we are told, one of the "unplaced" writers of the nineteenth century, very popular with the public but regarded with caution by the critics; and this caution comes from the suspicion that many of Leskov's stories are ready made. They come too raw, too unevenly, too amateurishly out of life. They smack sometimes of the reminiscences of a District Commissioner. It seems to be a fact that a writer of the highest class must be driven by the instinct of the artist to strike a balance between life and literature very early; then only will he have time and place in his mind for the hourly discipline of imagination and sensibility which is essential to the formation of talent. The sight of the self-conscious artist "going to the people" or shrinking back in the midst of experience, is a subject for satire and, nowadays, for sociological attack; but I fancy he is in the right of it. The greatest artists have always rationed themselves. In the life of Leskov one can see that he paid for the rich experience which enabled him, among other things, to form an astonishing ear for the real speaking habits of people, by beginning to write too late in life. One has only to compare his manner of narration with Turgenev's. Both Leskov and Turgenev used what is now considered the old-fashioned device of setting a story within a story. The Baron puts down his glass after dinner and is reminded of an extraordinary man or woman he met years before. Or he retells something he heard when he was a student, or when he was out shooting. Now in Turgenev the convention is graceful, because you feel that he has invented that setting. There never was such a Baron with his glass of wine, nor such a student. The device convinces because it is an artifice. In Leskov one has no similar illusion. You feel his beginnings are muddled up with real life and, by the great paradox of art, they are distracting and unconvincing just because they are probably true.

Another reason for the uncertainty about Leskov's talent and the neglect of it in Russia is said to be political. A practical and experienced man, Leskov attacked the Left, especially the Nihilists and was boycotted by the Liberal papers and critics for the rest of his life. He was also especially interested in the religious subject, and was accused of being a debased clerical writer fond of mixing lewdness and religion. He deserted the impressive ranks of Russian pessimism for a gentler, more tolerant and warmer view of life. I can only say that I do not believe Leskov's position was seriously affected by these sins. Dostoevski did far worse in *The Possessed*, and Turgenev went almost as far in *Fathers and Sons* and *Virgin Soil*, and both survived the anger of the revolutionary fanatics. Aksakov was a conservative of the Conservatives. If Leskov's position was unsatisfactory to the critics the reason is plain. He brought the independence, the originality of the man who has put life before his political and religious views. Liberals and Conservatives both disliked him; and perhaps they had some right on their side. That kind of independence is frequently egotistical and unstable.

There are eight stories in *The Musk Ox*, and many of them stop at the point where Dostoevski would have begun to inflate them. Leskov is in many respects a minor Dostoevski, a Dostoevski without epileptic fits. The tale called *The Musk Ox* is about an uncouth and vagabondish fellow who is deeply religious and is training to be a priest. But he cannot get on with people. He is dirty, he is difficult, he has no pliancy. He becomes a tutor and finds the family he is with are corrupt and goes scowling away at a moment's notice to tramp the roads. Everyone, he finds, is tainted. There are fewer and fewer people worth seeing or talking to, and so, tramp-like and morose, refusing to work, demanding his bread at any door, he loses himself in the depths of society, looking for signs of the resurrection of the human spirit among the outcasts and disinherited. In the end, he finds a reformed estate run by a hard and thriving business man who recognises his originality and lets him hang around. The business man knows that "the musk ox" will try and upset his workers by preaching his peculiar Gospel revolution to them; but he knows, too, that the workers will regard the tramp not as a messiah but as a comedian. He is right. They love the "musk ox" and humour him. Everyone loves and humours him and this is too much. "The Musk Ox" hangs himself.

Like many of Leskov's stories, this one is slow in getting going. He is best in describing the unexpected reactions of peasant people and in recording their devious or stone-walling conversation. And he is especially attractive because of his sympathy. Leskov had a particular gift for leading one, step by step, into the quiet obstinacies of sainthood and for creating the awkward, the almost humdrum saint, the very ordinary man who has become isolated from the beliefs of his fellows by the force of experience. Where other writers interest us in ordinary people by giving them some bizarre habit of life or mind, or by turning them into picturesque eccentrics, Leskov sticks closer to his observation. The King Charles's head is not an amusing decoration in these people's lives; it is very often the main, immovable piece of furniture. In one of his tales, the mournful chair mender who is made to change his name by an erratic nobleman, lives with the new name all his life, as if it were a sofa or a sideboard he was keeping for someone. He lives with it religiously, without comprehension: there is nothing eccentric in this. For the new name is his luck. Too perturbing to be thought ludicrous, too useful to be enquired into. Again and again in Leskov's stories, something comes into the lives of the people and settles there immovably like an animal. There is the sensation of something mysteriously "in occupation," a sensation one has also in stories of Kafkas's. When the Lady Macbeth of the Mzinsk district is seized by sexual passion, we detect at once a change in the character of her husband's house. She herself walks about like an empress giving orders, quieting the whispers about her adultery, with gifts, until the servants say, "That's all. It's her affair—she will have to answer for it." When she begins her murders, we see guilt living in the house. In a remarkable passage, Leskov actually gives a form to this presence, without deviating into fantasy, but indeed by adding to psychological truth. After her first murder when she is lying down on her husband's bed dreaming of her lover, Katerina Lvovna sees a cat come on to the bed and she strokes it. She is puzzled because there is no cat belonging to the house. She does not realise that she has dreamed the cat.

In this dreadful story, in all of Leskov's best work in these two volumes, every sentence adds and tells, and Katerina moves towards her doom trammelled by her crimes, and only death can set her free of them. Circumstance, we feel, has moved into her life like the hostile figures of a dream, and has ousted her will. Her drama is impelled. And because of the laconic simplicity of the writing and the awkward garnishment of plain but real dialogue, her lot seems to us unanswerable and cuts speculation short.

Leskov's powers as a writer were brought out most strongly in his religious stories; but unlike most religious writers he was capable of many moods. He comes closest, I suppose, to the one or two Irish writers who are sometimes pious, sometimes sceptical, sometimes even ribald; and while he satirised the clergy or described religious failure, he also described the search for pure religion. And he did this, as a novelist should, without being didactic. His mind was saturated with the religious folk lore of the peasants. Leskov seems to have a more genuinely religious nature than "the great sinner," as we can see in the story called *On the Edge of the World*. Here the mystery of faith and the question of the nature of Christ are described as a search, and indeed, paradoxically, as a gradual shedding of what is formally thought to be Christian. A young bishop is obliged to put his life in the hands of a pagan tribesman during a Siberian blizzard; they exist together on an animal level, and at every turn the dull, ignorant peasant who refuses to be baptised and whose simple mind argues in a maddening and small circle, obliges the bishop to shed one certainty of dogma after another. The setting is unforgettable. In some ways the religious mystery has moved into the bishop's life in the shape of the stinking, stoical immovable tribesman. And the bishop is not presented as an obtuse or conventional figure of satire; he is sensitive, educated, courageous and altogether a delightful human being. There is a wonderful scene at the height of the blizzard when the peasant covers the bishop with a reeking reindeer skin and then crawls underneath with him, puts his nose against him and snorts his bad warm breath into the bishop's nose in order to keep him alive.

The Musk Ox is not as good a selection of Leskov's stories as *The Sentry* is, nor is it as well translated. The translator of Leskov has a cardinal difficulty. Leskov excelled as a writer of common speech and wrote many of his stories as they would be spoken in a kind of vernacular, which he sometimes stylised. This must have given his work a quality which escapes translation. Mr. Norman has tried an awkward mixture of what looks like Anglo-American dialogue and his renderings of talk are therefore patchy. But in attempting to cast the whole of a story in casual language, he frequently falls into a debased, magazine English of clichés and tired slang. The tinny facetious language of West End comedy is not suited to a Russian novelist of the nineteenth century or, indeed, to any novelist. We have a high standard of Russian translation in England and if, as I hope, we are to see more of Leskov's work, we have a right to ask that the standard should be maintained.

V. S. PRITCHETT

* *The Musk Ox*. By N. S. Leskov. Translated by L. Norman. *Routledge*. 8s. 6d.

The Sentry. By Nicolai Leskov. Translated by A. E. Chamot. With an introduction by Edward Garnett. *The Bodley Head*.

A POET OF THE RENAISSANCE

Ronsard. By D. B. WYNDHAM LEWIS. *Sheed and Ward.* 12s. 6d.

Ronsard made no scruple of proclaiming his own immortality, and, taking the long view, he has proved a true prophet. He is now sure of his place in the anthologies. Yet there is a sad falling-off between the niche that he occupies there and the palatial folio wherein he once held state, while the judgment of two centuries following his own generation would have denied him survival altogether. He faded into a neglect that far outlasted the natural, if unjustifiable, reaction against those great writers who so dominate their period that their death brings something of a release. It had nothing to do with the sentiments that he expressed, as in England a poet's intellectual or moral identification with his times can make him unsympathetic to immediate posterity. In French poetry style counts for more than matter, and here, for Ronsard's successors, lay his crime. To them he was guilty of marring the language.

Malherbe, the next dictator of poetry after him, coined the verb "to Ronsardise" for verse "harsh and improper." Boileau, dictator for the eighteenth century, cried with relief, "At last came Malherbe!" He formulated the accusation against Ronsard, that his muse spoke Greek and Latin in French. La Fontaine supported Boileau—"Ronsard is harsh, tasteless, choiceless, arranging his words badly, spoiling with his French the infinite graces of the Greeks and Latins." Fénelon and Voltaire agreed, in almost the same words. It is worth recalling these criticisms, since the eighteenth-century writers are too often blamed for doing just that for which they rebuked Ronsard. In any case, their indictment, founded or not, went to the heart of the Ronsard problem, which, like most French literary debates, is a linguistic one.

Mr. Lewis largely evades it, though in an interesting summary of Ronsard's preface to his epic, *La Franciade*, he shows the poet as a level-headed, even frigid, assessor of his Latin masters, and, in these words, an opposer of neologisms—"It is a crime of *lèse-majesté* to desert the language of one's country, alive and flourishing, in order to unearth I know not what ashes of the ancients." Here, indeed, is excellent doctrine, which, if Ronsard had only carried it out, would have saved the folio and made his successors' attack impossible. But the performance, by an overwhelming majority of pages, ran contrary to the intention. It is adroit of Mr. Lewis to say, "When one of the most erudite men the Renaissance produced turns on the Renaissance thus, stabbing it genially in its tenderest part, it is not for such as I to embroider the theme." But instead of his retiring thus, as though he could leave it to Ronsard to score points against the Renaissance for him, one wishes that Mr. Lewis would examine the bulk of the poetry itself, and explain the gap between Ronsard's principles and his achievement.

Possibly he declines because a defence of Ronsard in his entirety could not fail to be, to some extent, a defence of the Renaissance as well. And that is a period which, in his view, deserves a good scolding. Its chief offences are, apparently, that Whig historians have exalted it unduly at the expense of the Catholic Middle Ages, and that it produced the Reformation. It is to be regretted, indeed, that so much of this book is devoted to theological pamphleteering of a very slapdash kind. Mr. Lewis writes of Ronsard with genial enthusiasm, and has obviously made a deep study of the formidable complete works. Yet there is much quarrelsome irrelevance in the way that we are baulked of the adventure into the poetry, on which we might have been ably and excitingly conducted, and are left in the end, as far as criticism goes, with a consideration of little more than the usual anthology pieces.

With regard to these, the way is clear enough. Mr. Lewis has only to praise, which he does with gusto. Yet here, too, his combativeness discovers a target. This time it is Walter Pater, who is soundly cudgelled for not being full-blooded enough in his own expression of appreciation. But when Mr. Lewis writes of one of Ronsard's inspirers, "The fair Isabeau is what the Regency buck would call a spanker and the Victorian a slap-up filly," it is evident that Pater and he would be antipathetic.

In paying tribute to the best of the love-sonnets and to the freshness of Ronsard's delight in nature and his native Vendômois, he treads a well-beaten path. In insisting, and, perhaps over-insisting, that Ronsard was a serious member of the Roman Catholic Church, and the writer of religious as well as sensual and pagan poetry, he reveals an intellectual elasticity on Ronsard's part of which those who know only the love-cycle might be unaware. Mr. Lewis finds much to admire both in the believer and the belief that could admit of so accommodating a mental attitude. Yet was this not a common characteristic of the Renaissance mind, and, if praise is due, should not the Renaissance have it? In any case, it has given the book a good deal of its colour, for full advantage is taken of background and period setting.

Yet the essential personages stand out against the deep-hued tapestry of their time. Ronsard himself is plain enough, but it is especially his successive loves who are displayed in clear relief. Like contemporary medallions on the walls of the wedding-cake châteaux, Mr. Lewis's portraiture distinguishes and gives humanity to Cassandre, the banker's daughter of Blois; Marie, the country maid; Genèvre, the Parisian *bourgeoise*; and the court ladies, Isabeau, Astrée and Hélène.

This is useful research, for in Ronsard's poetry they are not very distinct. One of them might have lured him from his reading of Homer as well as another. The interest in their affairs is all on his side, in his emotions. But, perhaps owing to their change of object, he manages to keep up the excitement of his pursuit. A long-sustained constancy, as only too many sonnet-sequences have proved, is apt to run thin in providing inspiration. And Ronsard's passions are direct and unsubtle, and, in his case, all the more propitious to his poetry. The analytic method of Marius Scève's *Délie* and of the poets of the Lyons school were not his. He, as a competitor, would have been more justified than is Mr. Lewis in the sweeping pronouncement that "The Lyons poets wallowed in high-thinking obscurity." As for the remark that, "Mlle Labé, apart from her poetry, was hardly the type to appeal to a man who liked his women feminine," the long devotion of Olivier de Magny makes this ungallant judgment doubtful. Still more so do her own sonnets.

But though Mr. Lewis's interpretation of facts may appear sometimes prejudiced and debatable, the facts themselves defy challenge and witness to a conscientious labour lightly worn. To credit Malherbe with a wig is a trip, but hardly an important one. Above all, he is to be credited with what must have been a wearisome search through state papers, to discover traces of Ronsard's visit to England. Though he found nothing, he has saved future biographers their trouble, and can claim, despite a negative result, to have made an independent contribution to Ronsard studies. For what he tells us, he uses a manner that is certainly downright, but never pedantic. It is possibly the resolve not to fall into pedantry that has led to a certain exaggerated heartiness.

Here he is not out of key with his subject. Ronsard, when he donned the laurel wreath, did it with a swagger, and carried Parnassus by storm when the right afflatus came. Yet his quiet moments had more of immortal stuff than the frenzies. It is his pauses in the amorous onrush that we remember, when he halts really to look at his mistress and paints in his verse a serene interior with figure:

> Quand je te vois seule assise à part toi,
> Toute amusée avecque ta pensée,
> Un peu la tête en contre-bas baissée,
> Te retirant du vulgaire et de moi . . .

or:

> Vous me dites, maîtresse, étant à la fenêtre,
> Regardant vers Montmartre et les champs d'alentour . .

There is the same tranquillity in his pagan vision of death, which is only equalled by his final Christian poem:

> Je m'en vais découvrir quelque source sacrée
> D'un ruisseau non touché, qui murmurant s'enfuit
> Dedans un beau verger, loin de gens et de bruit:
> Source que le soleil n'aura jamais connue,
> Que les oiseaux du ciel de leur bouche cornue
> N'auront jamais souillée, et où les pastoureaux
> N'auront jamais conduit les pieds de leur taureaux . . .

T. W. EARP

TAMED TIGER?

The New Economy. By ROBERT BOOTHBY, M.P. *Secker.* 6s.

Mr. Boothby is entitled to claim that as a prophet in his own Party he has not been unhonoured: the Government's recent White Paper on Unemployment reveals, in relation to public works, the influence of a line of thought which attracted attention when *The New Economy* (now deservedly reprinted) made a brief appearance on bookstalls nine months ago. It would indeed be agreeable to accept Mr. Boothby's gospel wholeheartedly; he is a persuasive prophet and has a great deal more than the courage of normal Conservative convictions. Not merely does he admit that the *laissez-faire* capitalism which beggared the world and produced two wars within a generation is dead; in his plans for taming the capitalist tiger he includes the nationalisation of the Bank of England, conversion of the joint-stock banking system into a public service, public control over export of capital and the import of raw materials, and a number of other measures which are not common form with the average Tory M.P. Mr. Boothby is a highly civilised and intelligent person. He has seen the red light and realised clearly that mankind will in no circumstances tolerate a recurrence of the economic disorder which marked the inter-war period. His analysis of that disorder is brilliant; his concern for the future is to prove that the alternative is not necessarily Communism, but a society in which, given a certain amount of control, both private property in the means of production and the profit motive can be retained.

In this painless transition to controlled capitalism without tears one would like to believe. If belief is hesitant, it is because, first, behind all the remedial devices whereby, in *The New Economy*, an expansionist financial policy is to be secured without inflation, steady employment at an optimum level provided and the anti-social propensities of monopoly capital kept in check, there is the question of power. The Parliamentary State is to provide the checks and balances, and is to guide capitalism on lines conducive to the well-being of the many. But who is to control Parliament? Can we be certain that so long as the principles of private ownership and production for profit continue to exist in a large range of society's activities, the will of the many can find effective expression through the polling booth?

Finally, and here we come to the portion of Mr. Boothby's argument borrowed by the Government in their White Paper, the question arises whether unemployment would in fact be abolished or, rather, whether it would be abolished on tolerable terms. Let it be admitted that if a capitalist State used, as Mr. Boothby proposes, its control of the credit mechanism and of taxation to steady the flow of consumers' purchasing power, extreme variations in employment might to some extent be smoothed out. None the less, so long as profitability is retained largely as the deciding factor in relation to production, considerable fluctuations in employment, as Mr. Boothby admits, are bound to occur in all industries not directly controlled by the State.

Mr. Boothby's remedy is to offset one anti-social variable by importing another. That is, in boom periods public works would be deliberately slowed down "in accordance with a priority list," whereas in phases of private industrial depression public works would be stepped up.

Given sufficient mobility of labour—a mobility which Mr. Boothby hopes to promote by the guarantee of full wages during temporary unemployment to workers prepared to accept transfer at any time from one area or industry to another—this method of regulating public works expenditure might produce reasonable stability of employment *as a whole*, though there would still be marked swings of employment, now in this industry, now in that. But the social implications of this levelling device seem to me to be monstrous. What Mr. Boothby implies is that if, notwithstanding his controls, profitability has produced a boom in privately operated industries, then all public works in hand—electricity development, housing, etc.—must be stopped, irrespective of their utility, without regard to human needs. They order these things better in the U.S.S.R.

AYLMER VALLANCE

A PERIOD PIECE

A Twentieth Century Bishop. Recollections and Reflections by BERTRAM POLLOCK, K.C.V.O., D.D., Late Bishop of Norwich. *Skeffington.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Despite the shortage of binders and of paper many books continue to be published valuable neither to the educated nor to the simple. As a rule a book that is not worth reading is not worth reviewing, but Dr. Pollock's memoirs may be thought to deserve notice because of his eminent position. He was successively Headmaster of Wellington and Bishop of Norwich—one more example, the reader of his book may decide, of the prosperity that can be won by a limited and commonplace mind. But Mr. Harold Nicolson, who has grateful memories from his Wellington days, declares in his good-natured introduction that Dr. Pollock's mind was impatient, rapid and intricate. And Mr. Nicolson is an excellent judge of brains. He goes on to say that these memoirs were written when the author was already failing in health. This may explain their quality, it hardly excuses their publication. Dr. Hensley Henson, who was born in the same year as Dr. Pollock, 1863, has recently given us an autobiography displaying remarkable powers. If in fact the Bishop of Norwich was ever his intellectual peer, these memoirs calumniate him. But the reader can judge him only by the self-portrait that has, more piously than considerately, been made public.

One time King Edward with Queen Alexandra lunched in a large hall with many distinguished guests. Again I was puzzled. With great trouble we had got the exact drink that he liked through the people at Windsor Castle, from which he drove over. By an accident he upset the tall glass, spilling the whole contents on the floor. If his figure had been more slight his legs would have been drenched, but most fortunately the plentiful contents of the tumbler poured down between his legs without a drop splashing on to them. It did not seem that it would be polite to do nothing in an unpleasant situation. With his usual good humour when I quickly knelt down with a napkin as if to mop His Majesty's knees, he made everything easy by saying: "Oh, that is nothing, thank you."

This anecdote, of which the point is beyond my power to discover, may at least help to explain Dr. Pollock's career. As Headmaster of Wellington he came into frequent contact with the royal patrons of the school; he displayed the virtues proper to a courtier; and it was to the direct intervention of Edward VII that he owed his mitre.

His chapters on King Edward, Queen Mary and the Duke of Connaught are deeply reverent. One remark, however, of King Edward, deserves perpetuation. He suggested to Dr. Pollock a small change in the boys' dress, with this advice: "Do not announce that the present practice has been abolished, say it is discontinued." Here is a more characteristic anecdote:

Little things are an indication of character. I remember on one ceremonial occasion King Edward VII came over to Wellington with Queen Alexandra in the early days of motors, and arrived very dusty after the run. The Duke of Connaught had come before lunch and had washed his hands in my own room. King Edward remarked that he would like to have a wash to get rid of the dust. I was then a bachelor, and it was not possible for me to leave Queen Alexandra there and then. I was aware that the whole of my small staff (except a scullery maid) was on the lawn preparing for a garden party. In a moment the Duke turned to his elder brother and said: "Come along, I will show you the way. I know the Master's room." My horror was great on getting to my room—as soon as ever I could disengage myself from the gracious Queen—just in time to hear the Duke of Connaught saying to the scullery maid in a kind but firm voice: "And now you can go." I never knew, of course, what had taken place in the room where she stood, entirely unsupported, with the King and His Royal Highness. But the Duke, with his readiness to help me by relieving me of a puzzling position, must have entered into her feelings too, and like the true gentleman that he was, carried off the situation to the satisfaction of all persons concerned—even my own and the maid's.

This passage seems to deserve the attention of the sociologist, because the author is not a retired menial but a scholar belonging to the distinguished Pollock family. The cumulative effect of a series of such stories is disconcerting.

Whether he touched on politics, punishments or prayers, Dr. Pollock remained equally ingenuous. He concluded that an unknown lady who claimed acquaintance with a bishop's wife could not be an impostor, by watching her "table manners" while she ate poached eggs and cherry-pie. With equal sagacity he concluded that the English were full of deep religious feeling because the House of Commons in a fit of ignorant bigotry threw out the Bill for reforming the Prayer Book. (In fact a majority of the English members voted for the Bill, which would have passed but for the votes of Dissenters and unbelievers from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland). He was no less Conservative than Erastian, and enjoyed the illusion—so much commoner among Conservatives than among their opponents—that he was not a party man. He even attributed to Socialists the teaching that all men are equal. For such reasons as these his memoirs possess a certain interest for historians. It seems improbable that we shall look upon his like again.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

DETECTION

Towards Zero. By AGATHA CHRISTIE. *Collins.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Going, Going, Gone. By PHOEBE ATWOOD TAYLOR. *Collins.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

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batsmen of detection than Mrs. Christie? *Towards Zero* will get a great many wickets, or I'm heavily mistaken in the acumen of my friends. Halfway through the book I've asked them "Who did it?" Three-quarters way through I ask them again—and the names they reluctantly murmur are never the same both times. It is not a trick of Mrs. Christie's: it's her devilish art. There are about six subjects in *Towards Zero*, and she focuses our attention on each in turn. Some look too guilty; some look too innocent. Some have an opportunity, but where's the motive? Some have a motive, but where's the opportunity? So it goes on. The reader wobbles and wavers, and *shrinks from a decision*: and Mrs. Christie quietly bowls you out. Why? Just because you will not *decide* which is her "wrong 'un;" run down the pitch, and have a slam at it. I don't say you won't be bowled neck and crop even so. But you will go down gallantly, not like a duffer, hopping from foot to foot. And Mrs. Christie from time immemorial has two notorious "wrong 'uns" to hit out at. I've specified them before, but I shall not do so again, as I see that the struggle to coach victims against Mrs. Christie is utterly hopeless.

The scene of the murder in *Towards Zero* is a country house by an estuary on the South Coast. I can devise no way of outlining the plot without forestalling some of the excitement and bewilderment. But the solution is by Superintendent Battle, not by Poirot. That indicates that Mrs. Christie does not regard this work as flawless by her own supreme standard. The flaw is that the solution is only completed by the criminal's confession; and there should be no need for confession in a perfect specimen of detection.

For a picture of *Going, Going, Gone*, put the centre in Cape Cod and describe an auction, with Asey Mayo circling the circumference on the *qui vive* and a variety of highly fortuitous incidents coming in at a tangent to make things more difficult. A hoard of dollars hidden in some article at the sale stimulates the bidding for any object likely to contain it. Someone finds the money and gets murdered in the process. That is the plot; but you hardly realise it under the Asey Mayo sauce. Suggested epitaph for Miss Taylor, whenever the long series is terminated:

> To fast the Spaniards have to eat
> Stale Cod (called bacalao).
> But Phoebe Atwood has them beat,
> She feasts on Asey Mayo.

University murders require a flippant attitude, a range of repartee, some literary allusions and some eccentric dons. A sound plot would also be an advantage but Michael Innes can dispense with that accessory. *The Weight of the Evidence* descends from the tower of a provincial university in the form of a meteorite upon a deckchair containing Professor Pluckrose, smashing him to smithereens. The freakish behaviour of dons and undergraduates makes one suspect an elaborate practical joke. But alas! it is no joke. The absurdity of the characters is only emphasised to pave the way for an even more absurd *dénouement*.

Edmund Crispin, a new writer, follows the Innes trail, but does not disdain an authentic plot. *The Case of the Gilded Fly* occurs among the members of an Oxford Repertory Theatre under war conditions. The leading lady is shot in an undergraduate's rooms; and the case is solved by the Professor of English Literature. The author puts enthusiasm into his dialogue and some life into his characters, but betrays his inexperience by the demands he makes on his villain. The poor creature is neatly chosen for the work; but it is hardly fair to have to help out the solution as well as commit the crime. The motive, I'm afraid, is unworthy of such a thoughtful person.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

A SLIGHT DISAPPOINTMENT

Memories of Happy Days. By JULIAN GREEN. *Dent.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

These autobiographical sketches by a very remarkable French novelist have not the same degree of interest as his Journals. Mr. Green, who is American by blood but French by education, writes English with fluency and correctness, but he does not command the same distinction of phrasing here as in the language of his adoption. The story he tells in this book is a relatively quiet one, and although he is incapable of dullness, one derives the impression that, as an intensely subjective novelist, the best—the most vivid—of his personal experience has gone, metamorphosed, into his novels, leaving little but husks with which to make a book of memoirs.

Nevertheless there is much to entertain the casual reader. Mr. Green was a child of the century. His father, a southerner, had left Savannah in 1895 and established his growing family in France—first in Havre, then in Paris. The first chapters contain some amusing pictures: Mrs. Green's voice calling out, on hearing the door-bell: "If it's another bill, I won't pay it!"; her writing desk "with letters sticking out on all sides like feathers on a bird." Such details are always worth recounting, for they add something to our knowledge of a period. But there is a good deal else in the first half of this book which is surprisingly commonplace—school-days, visits to the Trocadero, descriptions of parents' odd old friends. It is clear that the author has a nostalgic passion for his childhood, and he has made it live—in *Le Visionnaire* and *Minuit*, but not in this book, where the people and events are presented in a strangely conventional manner that robs them of definition.

The latter half of the book is rather more lively. The author's account of artistic Paris in the 'Twenties, though the subject is hackneyed, has value. His description of the novelist Mauriac, in especial, is masterly, and those who admire Mr. Green will find a good deal to interest them in his account of his early efforts as a writer. This is not a negligible book, but equally it is not altogether what one expects from an imaginative novelist of Mr. Green's calibre.

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TITO SPEAKS. *United South Slav Committee, 5, Kensington Court Gardens, W.8.* 6*d.*

A reprint of a long speech by Marshal Tito at a meeting of the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation, held last November.

SUDETEN-GERMANS AND CZECHS. "*Einheit*," 189, *Westbourne Grove, W.1.* 9*d.*

Report of the conference of Sudeten-Germans held in London last year, giving the main speeches and part of the discussion.

FUNERAL REFORM. By JOAN CLARKE. *Social Security League.* 6*d.*

Proposals for the reform of funeral costs and procedure with special reference to insurance by the Secretary of the Social Security League.

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Week-end Competition

No. 757

Set by G. W. Stonier

A new front opened the other day. "Paddington Isolated," flashed the headlines in the *Star*, "S.O.S. Stops All Tube Bookings. Mounted Police Turn Out"; and it was not till evening, after a day of varying fortunes, that the same newspaper was able to report (stop press), "Position Easier." Competitors are asked to celebrate the Battle of Paddington in verse. Any metre, limit 20 lines.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, August 14th.
2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 754

Set by Fred Oyster

Competitors are invited to reveal new climes and a new fount of wisdom with a set of half-a-dozen proverbs from the Outlandish.

Report by Fred Oyster

I am an inveterate taster of proverbs, and the further the country of origin, the more rapt my attention. "Respect the date trees, for they are your aunts" is the kind of saying that must appeal to anyone who has crossed more streets than continents. "May your nose grow ever fatter," the conventional greeting of Persia, has always endeared to me the modern Iranians, who no doubt are businesslike and thin. Many competitors evidently shared my liking, and my pick for a collection of Outlandish proverbs would include the following :

You may throw your mother-in-law into the Great River, but you cannot make her sink.—(MARBUS.)

God gave the pong-fish* bones to teach us patience.
(*" Flourishing chiefly in the salt-water lakes of Eastern Outland, the pong-fish forms a stable article of diet for the indigent peasantry. In appearance it resembles our own herring, but the flesh is not so sweet."—Prof. Mungo Jones, *My Five Years Among the Outlanders.*)

Many mops, much muck.

Wishes leave no footprints in the snow.—(HUGH FORSYTH.)

God made sex, but the PROOD knows better.—(L.E. J.)

Do not bite the hand that starves you.

It's the early worm that is caught by the bird.—(BROTIUS.)

That you may comprehend Sin, travel to the One City and sit with your feet in a barrel of juniper wine, while the heavens rain small frogs upon you.

See that you are not taken in adultery, for a man so taken feels truly foolish.—(ZEK.)

"Don't hesitate," says the jackal to the tiger.

What man is foolish enough to be ashamed of his nakedness ?

Who goes toothless into the pot will not come toothsome out.—(LESLIE JOHNSON.)

Better be a dog and believe in man than a man and distrust God. (R. S. JAFFRAY.)

God is eternal ; but man is very old. (GUY INNES.)

The friend of my friend is no friend of mine.—(STANLEY J. SHARPLESS.)

All these have the authentic flavour, and some competitors managed to hint, too, at a particular Outlandia. There were L. E. J.'s proverbs from the Moon, among which I enjoyed "Eclipse first ; the rest nowhere," and "All the Moon and his wife were there." S. C. S. envisaged a people living on a small island, "very numerous, somewhat dull, determined in their undertakings."

Converse if you can ; speak if you must ; don't talk,

will probably give a clue to their geographical position.

"Auslander" conveyed a nice hint of Arcadia :

The air is edged with ice and the sun's beam
And melts in the mouth like ice-cream.
Every dog has his day, and cats have week-ends
In which to visit friends,

Most competitors managed to hit off one or two sayings (some of the best of these are quoted above), but to provide a good set of six wasn't so easy. I recommend that the prizes be divided equally between R. J. P. Hewison, Allan M. Laing, Sir Robert Witt and F.C.C. for being lively and for being able to keep it up.

PRIZES

You cannot move the crocodile with tears.
"I can throw him whenever I like," said the *burro*, and trotted another twenty miles.
The banana is as straight as God made it.
"What housing problem ?" said the snail.
You can go anywhere with a *machete*, and a woman to do the cooking.
No-wampum* is as good a man as much-wampum, but neither thinks so.
* Wampum = money. R. J. P. HEWISON

When rain is pink, then wise men drink.
Run off with my wife, but don't steal my spade.
The rich man longs for two bellies.
Step after step outstrips the swallow.
When the air freezes who cares which way the wind blows ?
The wanderer's aim is to return.
ALLAN M. LAING

From Hell.
To burn for ever becomes a habit ; to sing praises for ever would be a bore.

From the Moon.
The Man in the Moon looks like a bachelor-establishment ; but he has a hidden side where dwell Luna or Diana.

From Robinson Crusoe's Island.
However remote from civilisation there will always be Master and Man.

From Mars.
We Martians think little of you remote earth-worms, except Wells.

From the North Pole.
To be discovered once is enough, to be discovered repeatedly too much.

The Cave-man, a million years ago.
"Safety first's my motto, though a poor one. Some day when shelter-caves are unknown I hope it will be 'Live dangerously.'" SIR ROBERT WITT

The wayside marigold is brighter than the oranges, but it cannot quench your thirst.
I tamed a white deer from the forest, but its antlers broke down my stable-door.
Never waste your grains of rice, though they be numberless as roses.
The queen washed her hair in the shadow of the moon, but the goose-girl's hair was blackest.
It is sadder to have a wife who cannot sing, than a dumb nightingale.
The gentian said truly, that it was bluer than the sky, but can it make rain at the right time ?
Only for show, like a soldier's scimitar. F.C.C.

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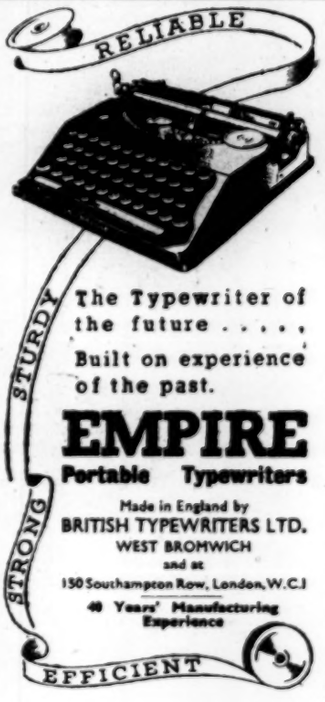

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